

Mayor Elect Ruthanne Fuller

Transition Committee Report

Community Voices:

Thoughts, Findings, Strategies and Ideas  
for the Future of Newton

December 28, 2017

*"I am thrilled to have such a diverse, talented, and committed group of citizens from all across Newton willing to lend their time and expertise to our Transition Team as we work to make Newton the best it can be. As Mayor, I plan to have an open door policy at City Hall as well as active outreach into the community - and this is a first step toward that goal. "*

*Mayor Elect Ruthanne Fuller*



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## Chapter 1 Subcommittee Executive Summaries

In early November 2017, Mayor Elect Fuller announced the formation of her transition team. A three member executive committee of co-chairs Sarah Ecker, Gloria Gavis and Aaron Goldman and over 30 Newton residents from all across the city were asked to participate in her transition as she prepared to become the 31st Mayor of the City of Newton on January 1, 2018. Divided into six subcommittees these dedicated and engaged residents set about answering the following:

Questions that each subcommittee considered:

- What should the Fuller Administration accomplish in its first year?
- What should the Fuller Administration accomplish at the end of 4 years?
- What processes will be important to accomplish these goals?
- How do we get genuine, ongoing community input?
- Extra Credit -
  - An early action item?
  - A long term multi-decade goal?
  - Something not on the radar screen that should be?
  - Process innovation ideas?
  - Something for another committee you want to share?

Meeting several times in the last two months and attending a series of nine “Out of Office Hours” across the city, committee members and Mayor Elect Fuller listened and heard from hundreds of residents about their concerns and ideas. Below are the executive summaries of each of these subcommittees and enclosed are their reports. This Transition Report will serve as a document of thoughts, findings, data, proposals and initiatives from the community for Mayor Elect Ruthanne Fuller.

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### Community Engagement & Community Life:

Newton is a vibrant community with engaged residents, thirteen unique villages, a strong public school system and easy access to Boston. Arts and culture, open space, faith based communities, small business and village life share a common thread seeking to enrich the Newton community through their varied and vibrant community based activities – building bridges, reaching out and connecting Newton’s citizenry. The Community Engagement & Community Life Subcommittee has responded with strengthening several initiatives already operating in the city, building upon those that have had some challenges and looking at opportunities to build a stronger fabric of connectivity for all residents. A particular value prominent in several contributor reports is creating a welcoming and inclusive community for all. Emphasis has been added to the growing Asian community, responding with best practices to bias and hate speech and how best to create within City Hall a welcoming environment for all of our diverse cultures in our community. Woven throughout is the value statements of the importance of our Newton Public Schools including social and emotional learning supports, creating opportunities for vibrant village centers, connecting area councils and neighborhood associations together, building strong faith based communities, promoting and preserving our open space and connecting the community with a vibrant arts and culture scene that is supported, funded and promoted.

## **Public Safety & Public Health:**

The Public Safety and Public Health team focused on several issues impacting the City of Newton today. Of particular concern is the national opioid crisis, to which Newton is not immune. We cannot be afraid to try new and innovative approaches when tackling this crisis. The team recommends hiring recovery coaches to be dispersed to treat individuals throughout the city, as well as additional locations where sharps can be safely disposed of. The group (which consisted of a two retired Newton Police officers, one of them the former Chief of the department) also suggested additional training for police and fire personnel to enhance professional development. They stressed the need for a social worker in the Police Department, which in recent years has been enormously beneficial with the increase in calls for mental health related issues. In the longer term, the team suggests exploring the idea of a Community Health Center, as well as expanding cross-departmental collaboration.

## **Transportation & Infrastructure:**

Transportation and Infrastructure continue to be issues that impact virtually every Newton resident and visitor to our city on a daily basis. We know that there is a great deal of work to do in both these critical areas, and this team developed several strong recommendations. The groups suggests working with regional organizations such as the Massachusetts Planning Organization (MPO) to consistently advocate for Newton's priorities; regular and thorough audits of our sidewalks and roadways to ensure safety; the development and implementation of a master bicycle plan within 5 years; additional transportation options for seniors, just to name a few. Internally, the team recommends establishing a distinct Department of Transportation, as opposed to the current structure in which transportation has a role within several existing departments. The group also suggests building on the city's budget for maintenance in public buildings; exploring additional uses for buildings such as Aquinas, Horace Mann and Lincoln Eliot; and creating additional housing in our village centers in particular for our increasing senior population. There are many other facets to the group's recommendations, and we hope you will take a few minutes to read through the full list.

## **All-Age Friendly SubCommittee:**

As a hallmark of Mayor Elect Fuller's campaign, she often stated her core value and principle of striving to have Newton be a diverse and inclusive community for all. In that spirit, diversity, inclusivity and opportunity underline the recommendations of the All-Age Friendly Subcommittee's Report. This vision assumes welcoming people of different economic status, races, cultures, sexual orientations, mental and physical abilities, and ages. An inclusive community depends on residents, groups and government working cooperatively to address common interests and takes a supportive approach to its most vulnerable citizens. Opportunity means the ability to be a full participant in city life, to grow, to learn, to connect and fulfill one's potential. To be a place of opportunity a city must have leadership willing to set an inclusive tone, open doors, build bridges and provide the appropriate support and scaffolding for all children and adults looking to prosper. Seeking and listening to a variety of opinions and viewpoints is a crucial first step. From toddlers to seniors, the All-Age Friendly Subcommittee met with several key stakeholders committed to supporting our community. Much data was collected and reviewed to articulate the following priorities: Transportation & Mobility, Housing, Education and Communication and a long range view was taken as to the changing and shifting dynamics of demographics and how Newton can and should keep pace with these changes.

## **Village Vitality, Economic Development & Housing Affordability:**

The Village Vitality, Economic Development and Housing Affordability team urges Mayor-Elect Fuller to adhere to the strategic principles set forth in Newton's Comprehensive Plan, particularly those portions of the plan addressing business and village center development. The new administration should use City policy to encourage desired business activities and support small business activities. Mayor-Elect Fuller should employ an inclusive process engaging residents, building owners, and members of the business community to develop a vision for each village and take an active role in managing these important centers. These plans should include an evaluation of parking requirements and ways to manage parking strategically. With respect to housing affordability, the team urges Mayor-Elect Fuller to ensure quality staffing of the Planning Department; to align our land use rules with the goal of housing diversity; to take advantage of state housing initiatives; to make better use of City resources; and to rely on local housing expertise.

## **Environmental Sustainability:**

The Environmental Sustainability team urges Mayor-Elect Fuller to work with Newton's citizens and stakeholders to ensure the long-term health and wellbeing of our community, our region, and our planet. Drawing on the tremendous resources in our City staff, residential, business and institutional communities, Mayor-Elect Fuller should craft action plans that implement ambitious sustainability goals. The team recommends expanding the role of the Sustainability Director as a senior leader within the Mayor's Office with appropriate oversight authority and staff. Organizational leadership rooted in the Mayor's Office should foster collaboration and innovation across City departments and ensure sustainability in all policies. The team urges the new administration to finalize and implement the Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Action Plan, update the Energy Action Plan, and initiate a Carbon Free Newton 2050 "road mapping" plan. Examples of "sustainability in action" include: commitment to energy aggregation; acquisition and preservation of open space; adoption of sustainable design and construction guidelines for public buildings and new development; and improvements to waste management policies.

## CHAPTER 2

### Mayor Elect Fuller Transition Team Members

**Transition Committee Co-Chairs** - Sarah Ecker, Aaron Goldman & Gloria Gavis

#### **Environmental Sustainability**

John Dalzell  
Tom Gloria  
Jonathan Kantar  
Councilor Amy Mah Sangiolo  
Jay Walter

#### **Community Engagement & Community Life**

Adrienne Hartzell  
Teresa Sauro  
Arthur Magni  
Rabbi Keith Stern  
Peter Barrer  
Vineeta Vajayaraghavan  
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Ellen Gibson, et.al  
Emily Prenner  
Betty Chan

#### **Public Safety & Public Health**

Nicole Castillo  
Al Cecchinelli  
David Jellinek  
Howard Mintz  
Tyrone Powell

#### **Transportation & Infrastructure**

Alicia Bowman  
Lois Levin  
Srdjan Nedeljkovic  
Nathan Phillips  
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#### **Village Vitality, Economic Development & Housing Affordability**

Seana Gaherin  
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Judy Jacobson  
Joe Prestejohn  
Jack Prior  
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John Sisson  
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#### **An All-Age Friendly Newton**

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Anne Larner  
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Newton Council on Aging  
Newton Senior Services Dept

## **CHAPTER 2A:**

### **Community Engagement & Community Life**

#### **Ideas, Suggestions and Proposals**

##### **Committee Members**

Teresa Sauro - Village Life

Arthur Magni – Small Business

Adrienne Hartzell – Arts & Culture

Rabbi Stern – Faith Community

Peter Barrer – Open Space

Vineeta Vijayaraghavan - Diversity and Inclusion

##### **Contributors**

Virginia Gardner - Misc. Concerns, *Co Chair, Nightcap Corner Newton*

Anne Josephson – Best Practices to Respond to Bias & Hate Speech  
*Chair of Steering Comm to Confront Hate Speech & Bias Incidents in Newton*

Emily Prenner, NPS A Transition Document - *Co President of the PTO Council Board*

Betty Chan – *Formation of City of Newton Diversity Committee*

Ellen Gibson, Mitch Lyons & Kathy Marchi - *Creating a Constructive Community Climate  
A Social Emotional Learning Culture Proposal*



## **Introduction**

### **Community Engagement & Community Life = Connections**

Arts and culture, open space, faith based communities, small business and village life share a common thread seeking to enrich the Newton community through their varied and vibrant community based activities – building bridges, reaching out and connecting Newton's citizenry.

## **What should the Fuller Administration accomplish in year 1?**

### **Village Life**

- Develop Neighborhood Associations/Councils in each of Newton's 13 Villages
- Develop Public/Private Partnership Shuttle Bus Services
- Hire Human Resources Director & effective managerial Department Heads
- Revise exciting City of Newton Website to be a robust workable website with links for event-related forms
- Create or Train an Ombudsman or Citizens Engagement Office

### **Inter-Faith Community Building**

- Understand and identify better who are the underserved in our community and partner with faith leaders to respond accordingly. Support and reach out to religious institutions in Newton who have a long history of supporting efforts to serve the disenfranchised of Newton.
- Articulate a clear vision and conversation about the degree to which ethics can be a broader and explicit theme in city initiatives. The faith community can be a source for that and a partner in teaching civic ethics.
- Enunciate best practices when it comes to the welfare of our children. The faith community can be a powerful ally in this area. The all-around well-being of our children is a powerful force in our community. The Mayor can be a powerful voice in supporting the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of our kids, with emphasis on middle school and high school.
- Be more vociferous in our public condemnation of hate crimes and hateful acts in Newton. The faith community must be included on a team that deals with the aftermath.
- Take opportunities to espouse messages of support and hope from the city to its residents. The world is a dark, foreboding place. We often feel a sense of despair and fear and our leaders can bring positive messages to counterbalance this.

### **Open Space**

- Measurable progress towards Webster Woods protection
- Start Process to Revise 2014 Open Space Plan
- Have the City of Newton adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Attached). Understanding however that there would be many steps, including a legal review and important public presentations and discussions, before the City could adopt this declaration. But the benefits to our Newton life would be significant.
- Articulate a date-anchored action plan to achieve the strategy outlined on the Fuller campaign website in the Open Space section. (For example, more resources for Open Space management)

### **Small Business**

- Increase Workforce Housing:

- Transportation and housing as they relate to employees/workforce were two common themes among many owners. With unemployment so low in the state, employers are already scrambling for good help. On top of that pressure, however, Newton is losing workers to surrounding cities partly because of the housing stock. It is so expensive to buy a home in the city that most workers have to commute to work. And there are not enough rental options which are more affordable and which allow workers flexibility to try a job and area for a few years before making the major commitment of buying a house.
- Improve Transportation Opportunities:
  - Another short-term goal is looking at transportation options for workers coming to Newton. The Mayor can only do so much with the MBTA, so building on existing commuter-friendly programs like the Bike Share program is a good start and continuing to build more bike lanes in the city. The more cars we can get off the street, the easier travel will be to and throughout Newton.
- Make Village Centers More Attractive to Customers:
  - The business equation is not just about the business owners, of course, but attracting customers. The City can help by making the village centers as attractive and easy to walk as possible, to encourage people to visit and shop in the centers.
- Institute More Streamlined & Predictable City Hall Processes:
  - To proceed with these goals, most everyone agrees that City Hall and the permitting process need streamlining and improvement for small businesses and non profits. We talked of making City Hall more user-friendly and that certainly struck a chord with small business owners. In the short-term, perhaps the City can hire an advocate for businesses and non-profits and can help them navigate the necessary departments and forms. But even better would be to streamline the permitting process itself.
- One restaurant owner described his encounter with City Hall bureaucracy and how expensive and frustrating it is to simply add an additional table (seating) -- as modest an expansion as one table for 4. The plan requires a site review and you have to look at parking impact and lots of other factors.
- The City should encourage a lively mix of businesses in village centers and part of that is making it easier for businesses to open.
- 

## **What should the Fuller Administration accomplish at the end of 4 years?**

### **Plan & Develop Senior Center**

Fund a feasibility study to create a new Senior Center, possibly in the Washington Street development, with more space, more parking and greater accessibility. Possibly, 100 year lease could be offered on the current space with the proviso that the developer help finance the new Senior Center. Or as another alternative consider opening Senior/Village Centers in each of 13 villages rather than expanding a single Senior Center serving the entire City.

### **Open Space Improvements & Addressing Concerns**

- Improve management of trees and invasive plants in all Open Spaces
- Increase accessible pathways in Open Spaces
- Document walking paths and trails throughout the City “inspired by Lexington Town program ACROSS Lexington.” (*This reference to Lexington’s program also belongs in the section on Something for another Committee*)

- Partner with the Native American community in Newton to advocate for Open Space and increase utilization. (*The Native community in the larger Boston area has identified Open Space as an important priority.*)
- Learn from Kessler Woods acquisition experience to prepare Executive Office for opportunities to acquire open space in a timely manner
- Using the existing and future Open Space Plans, evaluate Conservation Restrictions for all open spaces, decide which can be preserved now and which need flexibility for the City's purposes in the future.
- 

## **What processes will be important to accomplish these goals?**

### **Vibrant Village Centers**

- Town meetings with Department heads in attendance in each 13 villages. Mayor Warren did this when he started his administration and worked so well within the villages. At these meetings, you could have a sign-up sheet for volunteers to start an area council or association in their Village.
- Nonantum Neighborhood Association has been in existence for 7 years. Within those 7 years we have had 7 successful Village days with scholarships to Nonantum Seniors. NNA Facebook page was created with a mission statement, posts about meetings, information about events, etc and has over 2,000 followers. Having an active Association we are now a community resource, developers are meeting with us for neighborhood inputs on their developments, etc.
- Associations coming together monthly to create village partnerships, share ideas, etc.
- Utilizing parks for entertainments such as bands, movie family night with pizza, piano in the park with performances, etc. which would bring neighbors and families out into their villages.
- Ongoing community output can be achieved by being open to meeting with people, communicating through social media, and other forms (mail, phone, individual groups, like PTO organizations & Associations/Councils)

### **Open Space**

- Create a formal connection, synergy and shared information between Parks & Recreation Committee and Conservation Committee to preserve open space. Create a process to develop common policies on Open Spaces no matter under whose jurisdiction they fall. Document a set of policies and procedures. Assign a person or committee to monitor adherence, evaluate effectiveness, and revise in future.
- Create an organized process to develop access and continuity for walking trails especially in response to Special Permit applications.
- Encourage Village organizations and groups to form advocates, protectors, maintainers for their local Open Spaces, who will work in coordination with the relevant City Department.

### **Small Business**

- Streamline permitting process for predictable outcomes for small business owners in terms of process and timing of applications.

## **Early Action Items**

- Create Area Council / Neighborhood Association Citywide Subcommittee to address unity and city wide issues. Mayor would be invited guest and minutes of meetings forwarded to Mayor's Citizen Engagement Officer.

- Form Webster Woods Advisory Council and declare the City's intent to acquire other Open Spaces on an opportunistic basis
- Sign Sudbury Aqueduct walkability agreement with MWRA

### **Something Not on the Radar but Should Be**

- Engage & Connect with Native American Newton citizens (60 people per the 2010 Census)

### **Something for Another Committee**

- For Transportation Discussion - Open Space wants to Promote & Publicize walking trails inspired by Lexington Town program ACROSS Lexington
- For Schools Discussion - Faith Community Supports a stronger public policy in the NPS regarding how the city and school department responds to various hate crimes and various incidents. They are not convinced there has been a powerful message sent
- For All Age Friendly Newton - Organize process to encourage participation in City Commissions and Committees: track openings in transparent process; where possible, develop common policies across all committees for nominations, terms, term limits, leadership selection, etc. (This is particularly useful in connection with recent retirees with time, energy, and experience who can help the City without additional payroll expense.)

*Adrienne Hartzell,  
Managing Director, Newton Cultural Alliance  
Executive Director of New Philharmonia Orchestra*

## **Arts & Culture in Newton**

### **Introduction**

Conversations with more than 40 arts and culture stakeholders resulted in six common and shared topics of interest to continue the creation of a vibrant creative community in Newton, open and accessible to all. Presented here first in summary form and then expanded with additional comments.

### **An Arts & Culture (A&C) Playbook Summary**

- Connect
  - A universal sense that through work in the arts the community is served as creative expression enriches and challenges each life it touches. Some examples of success in Newton include:
- Establish a Department of Arts & Culture for the City
- Develop a Comprehensive Cultural Plan
  - To guide the development of enhanced arts community enrichment and consistent with RAF platform including establishing a Cultural Task Force, expansive inventory of resources of all kinds, SWOT analysis
- Funding/Staffing
  - Encourage City Hall connect – faces of the City on all levels and increase funding and other support for A&C
- Space
  - An all but universal sense that the creative community needs creative space, reasonably priced and/or subsidized, including but not limited to studios, rehearsal, teaching, performance
- Communication
  - Across the entire city infrastructure and with all city residents.

### **Transition Report Items**

#### **One year goals**

- Task Force develop and complete Comprehensive Cultural Plan
- Staff research and develop a comprehensive list of potential tools to address space needs and development opportunities – collaborate with planning department

#### **Four year goals**

- Establishment of village cultural hubs in most if not all villages
- Performance space for large performances and studio space for visual artists
- Comprehensive Cultural Plan expansion to include long term goals of world class creative space and making Newton a cultural destination

#### **Processes Required**

- Inclusive conversation with creative community stakeholders
- Task force membership include representatives of organizations, a few individual creative folk, all people who have the time and are able to commit to meet regularly and frequently to get the

research and job done, set goals and expectations. Leadership team drawn from community arts leaders.

- Ongoing community input:
  - Regular meetings to update interested stakeholders who are not part of the TF
- Website or blog format to share information
- Village conversations

### **Extra Credit**

- Early Action Items:
  - Establish a Department of Arts & Culture
  - Establish an Arts & Culture Task Force of 8 – 15
  - Attend a cultural event

### **Multi Decade Goals:**

- Establish Newton as a world class arts destination with appropriate facilities and transportation
- Establish a first class arts and/or performing arts center to support the local creative community as well as draw national and international artists

## **An Arts & Culture Playbook - Expanded**

### **Connect**

A universal sense that through work in the arts the community is served, as creative expression enriches and challenges each life it touches. An underlying assumption is that Newton is a vibrant cultural community already with a vast number of creative people in every discipline and on every level of personal development. The challenges lie in proper support for this eclectic mix as we seek to establish a much stronger connection amongst the creative community itself as well as with the constituency at large.

### **Establish a Department of Arts & Culture for the City**

Elevate the Arts and the values, attributes and strength it brings to the quality of life in the City including encouraging a conversation on best practices for connecting by:

- Encouraging both multi-discipline collaborations as well as multi-cultural understanding and participation through the arts
- Developing organized participatory programming such as
  - Musicals – play-alongs, sing-alongs as in Messiah or Pete Seeger/folk
  - Rap sessions
  - Open mic sessions
  - “Paint night” events

### **Develop a Comprehensive Cultural Plan**

To guide the development of enhanced arts community enrichment and consistent with RAF platform. To include

- Establishment of reasonably sized Cultural Task Force (TF) to lead inclusive process to develop a cultural plan in conjunction with related city staff including
- Inventory of spaces (see attachment) updated and broadened from 2016 document
- Inventory of organizations, artists, existing programs, capacities, audiences served, etc.
- SWOT analysis of A&C in Newton
- Study of under-utilized city properties including but not limited to
  - Aquinas, Horace Mann opportunities
  - Women’s Club in Newton Highlands
  - Crystal Lake Bathhouse re-make opportunities for the arts



- Make the arts part of the city conversation on funds going build/develop space for citizen participation to make sure best use of funds for year round activities
- Consideration of how the city can leverage developers to give back thru providing needed space for the arts, including public/private partnerships, tax credits, etc.
- Review of other successful models on powerful civic tools
- Develop a conversation with and encourage breaking down of barriers with the School Department to allow more community use of school facilities with reasonable scheduling opportunities and reasonable rates.

### **Ultimate Goal**

Make Newton a cultural destination – inherent economic impact

- World class facilities
- Transportation
- Parking
- Artist opportunities

### **Funding/Staffing**

- Encourage Mayor Fuller to attend as many cultural events as possible – perhaps a minimum goal of once a month – a mayor's presence is an enormous source of credibility and support
- Commitment of the City to a budget to support arts and cultural organizations, projects, etc,
- Increased arts and culture staff – Arts Concierge, Arts Tsar, Arts Liaison + program staff
- City match to MCC Local Council grant funds
- City support:
  - Encourage staff across the City to take a “how can I help you” smile on the face attitude
  - Encourage each City department to review and develop easily accessible and easily understood procedures and guidelines for permitting, licensing, signage, public art, health/food/event issues, building and zoning that are reasonable, doable, respected and enforced
  - Encourage the understanding and coordination across city departments that the arts and culture can truly enhance the city
- Consider that the social element of any creative experience is key to the success of connecting – how can this be made more consistent, easier and reasonable
- Encourage city departments (DPW, Parks & Rec, etc.) to embrace representatives from the creative community and assist in painted sidewalks, signage, poetry, etc.
- Develop seed funds to launch small projects
- Signs and poetry in each village
- Other “easy” projects to enrich everyday life in the villages
- Consideration of ways to increase and sustain additional funding for arts and culture– further City support for the work of Newton Pride
- Identification of qualified and committed volunteers to help develop systems and tools identified and endorsed by the City arts and culture staff
- Space
  - An all but universal sense that the creative community needs space, reasonably priced and/or subsidized, including but not limited to:

### **Visual arts**

- Studios – of various sizes at “reasonable” rates – including possible subsidization by the city
- Live/work space to make it possible for artists to live in the community
- Exhibit spaces – municipal and private business
- Public art – across the villages and recreational areas – sidewalks, crosswalks, power boxes, benches, bus train & shelters

### **Performing arts: music, dance, theater**

- Rehearsal – of various sizes for various disciplines
- Teaching – particularly for dance
- Performance – particularly large performance

### **Consider dialogue**

On development of a large cultural center vs. continued organic development of cultural hub spaces in the villages with consideration of both ideal goals and reasonable expense.

### **Art & Culture Communications Strategy**

- A significant need expressed by nearly everyone is to find a way to communicate with all of Newton's citizens so they know about all the opportunities in the city.
- ARTS website with more than a calendar
- Better communication and coordination between departments throughout the city.
- Enhanced social media efforts to market and support the creative life of Newton.
- ARTS newsletter and/or blog

## **Expanded thoughts on Transition Report Items**

### **One year goals**

- Task Force develop Comprehensive Cultural Plan with support from City Staff and departments.
- Begin with review Newton's creative community successes and already functioning local creative hubs to consider how these can be used as models and/or expanded to further serve the community including work of individual organizations as well as the Arts Festival.
- Staff research and develop a comprehensive list of potential tools to address space needs and development opportunities – collaborate with planning department based on established structure for communication and pursuit of goals.
- Take advantage of existing resources – no need to completely re-create the wheel – caveat – I have not read all of each of these but found them to have potential interest:
  - Marty Walsh plan <http://plan.bostoncreates.org/>, <https://www.boston.gov/departments/arts-and-culture>
  - Arts and Planning Toolkit: <http://artsandplanning.mapc.org>
  - MA Cultural Council resources – consider possible MCC programs that could be helpful to the city and/or have Anita Walker, Jay Paget or others come to Newton to meet and advise.
  - <https://www.curbed.com/2017/8/16/16156884/art-gentrification-cultural-space-city-funding>
  - [http://www.mtauburnassociates.com/pubs/Utilizing\\_Tax\\_Incentives\\_to\\_Cultivate\\_Cultural\\_Industries.pdf](http://www.mtauburnassociates.com/pubs/Utilizing_Tax_Incentives_to_Cultivate_Cultural_Industries.pdf)

### **Four year goals**

- Establishment of village cultural hubs in most if not all villages – giving each community a place to gather, listen, create, learn, share and connect.
- Performance space for large performances and studio space for visual artists – significantly improve these kinds of facilities for use by the immediate community and its creative individuals and organizations as well as by others coming into Newton to enhance the opportunities for Newton and regional residents.
- Further develop Comprehensive Cultural Plan to include fleshing out long term goals of world class creative space and making Newton a cultural destination.

### **Processes**

- Inclusive conversation with creative community stakeholders – perhaps sub-committees within the task force to focus on gathering information from larger community on interest/need, working with City departments and elected officials.
- Mayor and team – with or without arts representation establish vision, goals, expectations and timing for the work of the task force.
- Task force membership chosen by Mayor to include representatives of organizations, a few individual creative folk, all people who have the time and are able to commit to meet regularly and frequently to get the research and job done, set goals and expectations. Leadership team drawn from community arts leaders.
- Ongoing community input – get input from interested people on how best to do this.
- Regular meetings to update interested stakeholders who are not part of the task force.
- Website or blog format to share information,
- Village conversations on specific interests/needs/opportunities – area councils and village neighborhood associations.

### **Early Action Items**

- Establish a Department of Arts & Culture
- Establish an Arts & Culture Task Force of 8 – 15
- Attend a cultural event

### **Multi-decade goals**

- Establish Newton as a world class arts destination with appropriate facilities and transportation.
- Establish a first class arts and/or performing arts center to support the local creative community as well as draw national and international artists.

### **Something for another committee**

At least in part – take a look at what small projects can be done in villages to bring people together – to connect – piano project is a good example. Benches, more outdoor dining and/or food truck options, more green space with gathering opportunities – signage and/or poetry boards, etc.

### **Concern – everything costs money!**

This synthesis of thoughts and dreams is just that with little effort to address how to fund any/all of it – in keeping with leaving Finance out of the Transition team work. Nonetheless finding realism will be a major element part of determining how together we can move the general effort beyond the planning forward.

### **Supporting Documents**

- A PDF – included in this email of the inventory of arts spaces done by the planning department in 2016.
- A spreadsheet of all the 40+ “contributors” to this synopsis including their disciplines and interests.
- Emails from 15 – 20 folks on what interests them
- Planning Department Event:
  - Thursday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. is the “Tapping the Creative Economy: Zoning, Arts, and Artisans” event in our Zoning Redesign event series.

***Contributor: Virginia Gardner***

## **Miscellaneous Concerns**

## **Development**

We here on the North Side are facing a huge development, now referred to as the Washington Street Corridor, It takes away one lane on each side of the street, cutting the traffic flow down to one lane. This plan will redirect traffic into our small neighborhoods. It may accomplish getting a bike lane in place but to the cost of neighborhoods in parts of ward 4, 3, 2, and 1. The alternate routes will run along Auburndale Ave, Webster Street, River Street, Cherry Street, Craft Street, Waltham Street ,just to name a few. In West Newton, this will drastically change the natural neighborhood flow of traffic and we think dump it right into our neighborhoods. The Auburndale Square project proved this to be correct.

### **A new Senior Center**

As you know I was very involved in the campaign for Franco Cedrone, during that time our committee focused attention on many issues one is a new senior center . I strongly feel a plan should be in place to add a senior center into the Washington Street development, more space and more parking is necessary to make the senior center better and more accessible. I believe a 100 year lease should be in place, the sale of the current space could help finance this and the developer could also kick in .

### **Street maintenance and water, gas pipes**

When I go out for a run, I can still smell gas coming from some of the sewer /water lines.

### **Water /sewer cost**

Our water bill it outrageous something must be done to change the formula from 1/3 cost water and 2/3 cost sewer.

My neighborhood is home to the Rumford Ave recycle center, trucks are still parked there and some city work begins and ends on Rumford. Included in this is a huge solar farm. Many abutters were never notified or included in the plan discussion. . It is sad that this landfill provides some much to the city , electricity, recycle, storage, yet our streets are cleaned and plowed last.

### **Trees**

A large number of trees are dying and NOT being replaced.

### **Lead in the drinking water**

Many north-side residents are concerned about the lead in the drinking water. Let's solve this now.

*Contributors: Ellen P Gibson, Mitch Lyons & Kathy Marchi*

## **Creating a Constructive and Continuous Community Climate: A Social Emotional Learning Culture Proposal**

### **Overview**

As Mayor-Elect Ruthanne Fuller prepares to take office, she has many choices for paths to improve Newton. Creating a Community Coalition ensures the continuation of social emotional learning (SEL) in our schools and expands the successes of SEL beyond the schools into the broader community to create a constructive and sustainable community climate that fosters positive, sustained community dialogue. Creating a Community Coalition will yield tremendous benefits for Newton.

### **What is Social Emotional Learning?**

Grounded in the latest brain science, social emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Effective SEL processes necessarily involve aligning relationships, instruction, structures, and systems in ways that are culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate, coherent, and beneficial for all. Effective SEL unfolds through explicit learning and when woven throughout everyday practices. SEL competencies used by individuals, between individuals, and within and between groups are necessary for thriving, just, diverse, democratic societies ("What is Social and Emotional Learning?," Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, retrieved from <http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning>). CASEL identifies five core competencies that guide SEL. These are: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision making. (see <http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning> for a review).

### **Research Demonstrates that There are Many Important Benefits to SEL**

- **Better academic performance**
  - Achievement scores are an average of 11% higher than students who did not receive SEL instruction
- **Improved attitudes and behaviors**
  - Greater motivation to learn, deeper commitment to school, increased time devoted to schoolwork, and better classroom behavior
- **Fewer negative behaviors**
  - Decreased disruptive behavior, noncompliance, aggression, delinquent acts, and disciplinary referrals
- **Reduced emotional distress**
  - Fewer reports of student depression, anxiety, stress, and social withdrawal

*Source:* Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D., & Schellinger, K. (2011) "The Impact of Enhancing Student's Social and Emotional learning: A Meta-analysis of School-based Universal Interventions." *Child Development*. 82 (1), 405-432.; Taylor, et al "Promoting Positive Youth Development Through School-Based Social and Emotional Learning Interventions: A Meta-Analysis of Follow-Up Effects" *Child Development*, July/August 2017, Volume 88, Number 4, Pages 1156–1171.

## **SEL Promotes Healthy Decision Making and Prevents Risky Behavior**

Research is clear that the investment by a community and school district in SEL has positive impacts on promoting healthy behavior and decision making thereby reducing risky behavior. When a community invests in these early interventions, the need for later investments in mental health, addiction and other crisis interventions is decreased. Investing in the promotion of healthy decision-making results in decreases in instances of substance abuse, addiction and other mental health illnesses. (<http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2015.302630>).

## **Community-Based SEL Reinforces Learning in Our Schools and Enhances Resilience**

Expanding SEL into the broader Newton community is not only crucial for the continuity of skills students learn in the classroom, but also for reinforcement of those skills beyond the school day. When the same concepts and language are used at school- or community-based after-school programs, within families, at after-school employment, and as part of athletic coaching and other extracurricular activities, children can practice these skills. Research demonstrates that resilient children commonly have 4 identified factors: social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy, and sense of purpose and future. (Krovetz, Martin L. *Fostering Resiliency*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 1999). Furthermore, when certain key protective factors exist for a child, they are more likely to bounce back from adversity. Those factors are: a caring environment where at least one adult knows and cares about the child, positive expectations that are accompanied by intentional support to meet those expectations and a child's sense of meaningful involvement. (Krovetz, Martin L. *Fostering Resiliency*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 1999).

## **The Newton Partnership Model Illustrates the Value of an Investment in SEL**

The Newton Partnership (TNP) grew out of a \$6M grant Safe Schools Healthy Students (SSHS) awarded to the Newton Public Schools in 2008 by the US Department of Education (CFDA 84.184L) (<https://www.samhsa.gov/safe-schools-healthy-students>). Its mission was to foster a network of support for children, youth, and families in Newton by supporting the nonprofits that serve them, by raising community awareness and funding for issues facing children, youth and families, and by cultivating collaboration among youth-serving organizations. TNP provided critical programs including: one-to-one mentoring; free out of school time fitness opportunities; education and training for students, school staff, parents, and community members that address school climate, bullying, alcohol and other drugs; social emotional support and mental health services for children and youth.

Partners included:

- the Newton Public Schools;
- Newton Departments of Health and Human Services;
- Newton Police
- Freedman Center at the Mass. School of Professional Psychology;
- Riverside Community Care Inc.;
- West Suburban YMCA;
- John M. Barry Boys and Girls Club;
- Middlesex Partnerships for Youth;
- Newton PTO Council;
- Family Access (Newton Community Service Center);



- Newton Wellesley Hospital;
- Dreamfar High School Marathon;
- Waypoint Adventure; and
- Multi Service Eating Disorders Association (MEDA).

(retrieved from [www.thenewtonpartnership.org](http://www.thenewtonpartnership.org)).

TNP was also the umbrella group for a US Department of Education Physical Education Program (PEP) grant (\$1.6 million 2011-2015) and a Department of Justice Mentoring grant (\$300,000 2010-2014).

(retrieved from [www.thenewtonpartnership.org](http://www.thenewtonpartnership.org)).

In 2013, the SSHS grant expired. In 2014, the PEP grant expired. Lack of funding, despite successes, prevents the continuation of this particular model of community collaboration that was effective in providing training of organizations' staff to support children, youth and families.

## **Newton Public Schools Establishes an SEL Department**

In June of 2014, the Newton Public Schools (NPS) applied for and received the U.S. Department of Education School Climate Transformation grant and SAMHSA Project AWARE grant to further the district's successful work in social emotional learning. The initial report of the SEL Department stated, "The School Climate Transformation grant is well-aligned with Newton Public Schools' social and emotional learning goals, supports efforts that are currently underway, and provides opportunities to increase capacity, professional development opportunities, and consistency and effectiveness across the district." (May 2015 School Department Memo: "Progress Towards Goal 2: Positive Social Emotional Learning in the Newton Public Schools." <https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/cms/lib/MA01907692/Centricity/Domain/69/Update%20on%20Social-Emotional%20Learning%20Program%20-%205-11-15.pdf>). Work under these grants to build a comprehensive SEL infrastructure beginning in the elementary schools through the secondary level began in November 2014 and is a 5-year grant, currently in its 4<sup>th</sup> year. Funding availability for the final year of this grant is unknown at this time; however, assuming the grant is renewed for its final year, there remains a need for funding to continue the planned work of the SEL Department within the schools and across the district. It is critical that the city's allocation to NPS be robust enough to allow it to continue the successful investment the school district has made in SEL for students.

(retrieved from

<https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/cms/lib/MA01907692/Centricity/Domain/69/Update%20on%20Social-Emotional%20Learning%20Program%20-%205-11-15.pdf>).

## **SEL Yields an 11:1 Return on Investment**

The economic benefits of SEL are clear. A recent study conducted by the Center for Benefit-Cost Studies for Columbia University's Teacher College shows that for every dollar (\$1.00) invested in training in social emotional learning, there is a return of investment of eleven dollars (\$11.00). (Belfield, Clive, et al 2015 "The Economic Value of Social and Emotional Learning"), (Social Emotional Learning Alliance for MA, "SEL to Reduce Costs" <http://www.sel4ma.org/selreducescosts/sel-to-reduce-costs/>). In recent years in Newton, comprehensive in-school and community-wide efforts have been largely grant-dependent. A robust city funding allocation to the school budget would allow for the continuation of the important SEL work thriving under the School Climate Transformation and AWARE grants. Furthermore, city funding for this work would allow the continuation of The Newton Partnership's community-based work and its expansion to all age groups. An investment in promoting SEL skills that enhance resilience, creating safe

and supportive school climates, and supporting all age groups in healthy decision-making will significantly decrease the need for future investment in later interventions to address mental health issues, addiction and substance abuse.

## **Creating a Constructive and Continuous Community Climate: The Bridge Between SEL and the Broader Newton Community**

When Newton comes together as a community, good things happen: our work is more collaborative and creative across departments, organizations and stakeholders; training and learning occurs across domains; the richness of diverse perspectives are given voice. When we work together in a foundational and fundamental way to be proactive in our upstream prevention and create a framework for constructive and engaged community dialogue we create a safe and inclusive community that engages all citizens. Various organizations exist that provide resources, support and learning communities for developing constructive community climates that allow community members to engage in effective dialogue. (see [www.sel4ma.org](http://www.sel4ma.org) and [www.ncdd.org](http://www.ncdd.org)).

Newton has a history of effective community-based change through community coalitions. Two recent examples are: The Newton Partnership and NewtonCares: Coalition for Suicide Prevention and Mental Health whose mission is to raise awareness and identify strategies to assist in creating a healthy, empowered community that promotes emotional wellbeing across the lifespan (retrieved from [www.newtonma.gov/gov/health\\_n\\_human\\_services/youth/suicide\\_prevention\\_n\\_mental\\_health.asp](http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/health_n_human_services/youth/suicide_prevention_n_mental_health.asp)).

Including the business community in the reinforcement of SEL skills in student employees and expanding those skills to include employers and adult employees has positive impacts on workplace climate and culture, as well as business production. (Emotional Intelligence positively affects organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and reduces counterproductive work behavior (CWB). Miao, C., Humphrey, R. H., & Qian, S. (2017); Are the emotionally intelligent good citizens or counterproductive? A meta-analysis of emotional intelligence and its relationships with organizational citizenship behavior and counterproductive work behavior. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 116, 144-156.); Leaders' emotional intelligence (EI) positively relates to subordinates' job satisfaction. Miao, C., Humphrey, R. H., & Qian, S. (2016). Leader emotional intelligence and subordinate job satisfaction: A meta-analysis of main, mediator, and moderator effects. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 102, 13-24.).

## **Proposed Early Action Items:**

### **Establish a Community Coalition**

A Community Coalition comprised of a Core Management Team that originates in the Mayor's Office sends a strong, clear message that that we value an engaged, inclusive and democratic community and would not be dependent on grants for funding or existence. In addition, this Community Coalition's collaboration and co-partnership with the Newton Public Schools would further the message that SEL is a community-wide value that recognizes and supports the teaching of social emotional skills in the schools and believes the expansion of these skills beyond the schoolhouse steps and into the broader community is important for our children and for the larger community.

The goals of this coalition would be to explore:

1. Social emotional health and wellbeing across domains beginning with the departments housed in City Hall,
2. How to effectively cross train among those domains, and

3. Leveraging pre-existing structures like The Newton Partnership and the NewtonCares Coalition.

In addition, the Mayor's Office could provide some convening infrastructure to set meetings, establish and maintain lists/data base, etc.

A sample list of potential Community Coalition members would include: the Newton Public Schools, secondary level students (from schools or Youth Commission), Health and Human Services Department, Human Rights Commission, NewtonCares, religious groups, Newton After School Association , youth-serving nonprofits (West Suburban YMCA, the John M. Barry Boys & Girls Club), Riverside Community Care, the Newton Schools Foundation, other community nonprofits (2<sup>nd</sup> Step, Centre Street Food Pantry, etc.), and local businesses.

### **Team Training Opportunity**

Send the Community Coalition's Core Management Team to a training provided by the Social Emotional Alliance for MA (SEL4MA): "Promoting Effective SEL in Your Community." ([www.sel4ma.org](http://www.sel4ma.org)). This day-long regional event will provide the opportunity to:

1. Learn best practices and practical solutions for developing a comprehensive SEL plan;
2. Assess the current state of SEL in the broader Newton community
3. Connect with others in our areas to share and learn best practices
4. Discover strategies for successfully advocating for SEL in Newton
5. Create an action plan to bring back to our work in Newton

## **Summary**

The growing body of empirical research combined with Newton's experience in our schools and with The Newton Partnership show the value of investing in SEL. When Mayor Elect-Fuller takes office, she has an opportunity to make a significant difference at a critical time by investing in SEL. The benefits extend from the schools, to city government, to Newton businesses, and the community.

We appreciate the opportunity to make this proposal to the Mayor-Elect and her Transition Team. We encourage Mayor-Elect Fuller to establish a Community Coalition to move Newton forward utilizing models of proven success in conjunction with her leadership and goals for our community. Creating a culture of social and emotional learning will result in a constructive community climate for all of Newton.

## **Additional Resources**

### **Organizations and Commissions**

Social Emotional Learning Alliance for MA  
[www.SEL4MA.org](http://www.SEL4MA.org)

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)  
[www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)

Transforming Education

<https://www.transformingeducation.org/>

Special Legislative Commission on Behavioral Health Promotion & Upstream Prevention in MA

<https://www.promoteprevent.com/>

Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy

<http://www.renniecenter.org/research/reports/2016-condition-education-commonwealth>

## **Resources**

Newton Public Schools System-wide Goals 2017-2018

[https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/cms/lib/MA01907692/Centricity/Domain/51/Systemwide%20Goals%202017-18\\_Final.pdf](https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/cms/lib/MA01907692/Centricity/Domain/51/Systemwide%20Goals%202017-18_Final.pdf)

DESE Guidelines for Implementing SEL

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/bullying/SELguide.pdf>

Responsive Classroom Program

<https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/>

Safe & Supportive Schools

<https://traumasensitiveschools.org/get-involved/creating-trauma-sensitive-schools/>

Safe and Supportive Schools Commission - Second Annual Report (December 2016)

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/safety/?section=commission>

Newton School Climate Transformation Grant Update

<https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/cms/lib/MA01907692/Centricity/Domain/69/Update%20on%20Social-Emotional%20Learning%20Program%20-%205-11-15.pdf>

Newton Public Schools SEL Department website

<https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Domain/1108>

Newton SEL Department Presentation to School Committee

<https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/cms/lib/MA01907692/Centricity/Domain/69/Social-Emotional%20Presentation%20-%20PowerPoint%20-%205-11-15.pdf>

Newton Project AWARE Grant (Advancing Wellness and Resilience for Youth and Young Adults)

<https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/cms/lib/MA01907692/Centricity/Domain/1108/Project%20AWARE.pdf>

Random Acts of Kindness Foundation

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>

“Social Emotional Learning and Traditionally Underserved Populations” policy brief by Logan Nicole Beyer, American Youth Policy Forum,

## **Sample of Studies of Positive Impact of SEL on Business Success**

Emotional Intelligence positively affects organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and reduces counterproductive work behavior (CWB).

Miao, C., Humphrey, R. H., & Qian, S. (2017). Are the emotionally intelligent good citizens or counterproductive? A meta-analysis of emotional intelligence and its relationships with organizational citizenship behavior and counterproductive work behavior. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 116, 144-156.

Leaders' emotional intelligence (EI) positively relates to subordinates' job satisfaction.

Miao, C., Humphrey, R. H., & Qian, S. (2016). Leader emotional intelligence and subordinate job satisfaction: A meta-analysis of main, mediator, and moderator effects. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 102, 13–24.

The study found that emotion regulation ability enables employees to maintain higher positive affect (e.g., excitement and enthusiasm) while emotion facilitation ability enables employees to use their positive affect to enhance their creativity, as measured by their supervisors.

Parke, M.R., Seo, M.G., & Sherf, E.N. (2015). Regulating and facilitating: The role of emotional intelligence in maintaining and using positive affect for creativity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(3), 917-934.

Study found that employees' emotional intelligence was positively associated with job satisfaction and performance. In addition, manager's emotional intelligence had a more positive correlation with job satisfaction for employees with low emotional intelligence than for those with high emotional intelligence.

Thomas Sy, Susanna Tram, Linda A. O'Hara, Relation of employee and manager emotional intelligence to job satisfaction and performance Volume 68, Issue 3, June 2006, Pages 461-473

## **Newton Public Schools: A Transition Document for Mayor-Elect Ruthanne Fuller**

by Emily Prenner

There can be no better introduction to a Newton Public Schools (NPS) transition document than the following quote from Mayor-Elect Fuller's campaign website:

*'Great schools are the most important city service and are the cornerstone of Newton's success. We must continue to invest in our children, support our teachers, and rebuild our school facilities. Newton schools are among the best in the region. I'm committed to ensuring Newton has the very best public schools in Massachusetts.'*

We must continue to strive for excellence and equity in education, making sure all learners have the structure and support they need to succeed. In order to do this, we need to have depth and breadth of programming, small class sizes, excellent teachers, modern school facilities, support for all students, and the implementation of new programs. At the same time, we need to meet the demands of state and federal mandates and fulfill our contractual obligations. There are also some budget drivers we do not control that can increase needed funding. An example of this is out-of-district tuitions, where enrollment numbers have decreased, but the tuitions themselves have increased. Cost drivers like these are unique to the school budget, and don't exist in the municipal budget. This makes a maintenance of effort budget more costly.

The Mayor of Newton plays an important role in ensuring NPS continues to thrive. Aside from being the ninth voting member of the School Committee, the Mayor sets the yearly allocation for the school district - over \$200 million and roughly 55% of the city's total budget. Having sufficient funding for the annual NPS allocation is critical in ensuring NPS continues to be a 'cornerstone of Newton's success.'

The Mayor also plays an integral role in the improvement of NPS's school buildings. Over the past 4 years we have made great strides in improving school infrastructure. We must make sure we continue to make forward progress, and continue to make school building improvements a priority in the Mayor's Capital Improvement Plan.

Outlined below are some critical issues/priorities that face the School Committee in the next 1-4 years.

### **Sufficient Funding:**

Without sufficient funding, NPS cannot achieve excellence in education. At the very least, NPS needs to have a maintenance of effort allocation from the City in order to continue the same level of programming as the previous fiscal year.

- A gap between allocation and maintenance of effort can lead to cuts. Of course NPS should take a long hard look for any efficiencies that can be made within the existing programs. But after many years of making these efficiencies, there are a limited number of places to find savings. At the same time, there are departments, like special education, who are trying to be creative in their service delivery, in order to reduce spending.
- Cuts can lead to reduction in programming, larger class sizes, and further deterioration of school facilities. Cuts to programming can also be difficult to restore (i.e. world languages in the elementary schools).
- There are state and federal mandates, as well as contractual obligations, which we must fulfill.
- State aid is variable from year to year, and can cause a gap in the budget.



Given the current political climate, we don't know if there will be cuts to federal grant money. This includes Title 1, IDEA, and SEL grants.

- Small shifts in funding can have major repercussion to the NPS budget. Having a sufficient allocation from the city will be critical to prevent major cuts.

### **Recruiting and Retaining Excellent Teachers:**

Excellent teachers mean an excellent education for all our students.

- Salaries and benefits make up 85% of the total NPS budget - our most important asset is the quality of our teachers.
- We need to make sure they are paid fairly, so we can not only attract great teachers, but also retain them. When looking at the starting salary of a Masters-level teacher, Newton is ranked 13th out of 23 comparable districts. When looking at the top step for a Masters-level teacher, Newton is still in the middle - ranked 11th out of 23.
- Our entry-level salaries need to be competitive, so that when the best and the brightest teachers are looking for a job, they choose Newton. Otherwise we won't get them, and there will be a gradual erosion in teacher quality.
- Given the length of time it took to settle the last teacher's contract, we need to consider interest based bargaining techniques so both sides work collaboratively to get their needs met.

### **School Buildings:**

Over the past ten years, the School Committee has focused on ensuring our school buildings are updated for 21st century learning, as well as accommodating our increasing enrollment. With the opening of the new Angier and Zervas schools, as well as the ongoing renovation of Cabot, we've taken the first major steps towards updating our school facilities.

- It is imperative we continue to improve our school buildings, using the Long Range Facilities Plan as a guide.
- Many schools have old and outdated infrastructure. Lincoln Eliot, Franklin, and Countryside all need to be addressed in the near future.
- While it is disappointing the MSBA did not approve the Lincoln Eliot project for state funding, we cannot let this setback stall our forward momentum. We need a comprehensive plan for the Lincoln Eliot/Aquinas/preschool project - feasibility study for the use of Aquinas, funding sources, realistic timeline, educational requirements, etc.
- These school building projects are an important part of the Capital Improvement Plan, and should continue to be a top priority for the City.

### **Support for All Students:**

We need to make sure we continue to have programs available to support all learners in NPS. Funding for general education is a given, but we must also focus on additional supports for ELL programs, special education, social and emotional learning, as well as closing the achievement gap. NPS should continue to examine the efficacy of all these programs, and find new ways of providing services if necessary.

### **New Initiatives:**

A dynamic school district must always be looking at ways to innovate and improve. NPS is no different, and should look into the feasibility of implementing the following new initiatives. While this document has focused on maintenance of effort funding, these initiatives should be part of the future financial planning of NPS.

- Full day kindergarten
- High school start time

- Expanding mental health programs, especially in the middle schools
- Providing access to preschool for families who cannot afford private Preschool

Contributor: Vineeta Vijayaraghavan

## Diversity & Inclusion in Newton

### Overview

**The good news:** We all care about Newton. 42% voted (27% in Boston by contrast). Many new candidates ran. We have some great new talent in office. Many incumbents were reaffirmed in the value of their years of service. Thousands volunteered their time on campaigns, while thousands others volunteered for all the things in Newton that still managed to go on, like PTO community suppers and library events and teaching at the Chinese school and cooking for the Greek food fair in Newton Centre. People volunteered with love and passion for people and causes and organizations they believe in.

**What we need to be vigilant about:** We now for the first time in many years have an all-white city council and a white mayor. In a town that is just over 20% non-white and just under 80% white. Proportionate representation would suggest we should aspire to 4-5 people of color to be on a city council that is at the current size of 24. We should have serious concerns about missing important constituencies in this city that may feel they don't have a voice in politics.

We just finished a bruising election. For those fighting on both sides of 8+8 the election season doesn't even feel over, they were back at city hall with heated feelings the week after. There were subconscious dimensions of race and class in discussions of individual candidates, the charter, and the backdrop of affordability and housing. There are many dimensions of race and class in who feels that they can call their city councilor or go to city hall and speak persuasively and get support for their concern and get it addressed. A resident may be impeded because he is concerned about how good his English is, whether he has childcare, whether he is familiar with the format of how the comment period works. Many dimensions of race and class affect who is participating in other aspects of our "public square", whether that is news sites village 14 and Newton Tab, various village list serves, area councils, or organizing vigils at city hall or the police department or other municipal spaces.

**Goals:** On so many big important issues like protecting the environment or sustaining excellence in our schools, the great majority of our residents are on the same side. Most of us look at the national landscape and see a lack of ability to talk to each other, use facts and reason, accept the need for compromise, and have compassion for other points of view. We need to reinforce those common values, and have more chances to practice them together. We need to find a better way to talk through the hard things that will necessarily elicit disagreement like housing or the size of the city council. We cannot succeed in the arduous work of improving diversity and inclusion without repairing our underlying social fabric. We need to model a better way than we see in our broader culture, whether that's coarseness on the internet or coarseness in our political culture, we can do better than that and show our kids an example that will carry them through until the broader culture figures out better ways too.

***The rate of culture change happens proportionate to the rate of trust.***

***Culture change requires good relationships and good process to get to good outcomes.***

### What should the Fuller Administration accomplish in year 1?

#### **Build Relationships that foster equity & inclusion**

- Do an introspective on RF and her team. Something as simple as identifying the areas where she/her team belong to the "dominant group/non-target identity" and "non-dominant group/target identity" - gender, race, class, sexual orientation, ability, citizenship, religion, education... Where are there gaps? What voices are missing?
- What are ways RF can invite/reach out to/connect with the voices that are missing (without tokenizing or putting the burden on individuals from that group to speak for all the people of that group)? What process is in place to be not just sensitive, but responsive, to non-dominant/target group concerns/challenges?
- Actively build relationships with liaisons to POC communities and other communities that may feel less included: seniors, those living alone, renters, the economically vulnerable.
- Increase diverse input in committees, commissions, agencies, etc. consider chief equity officer.
- If people in leadership positions are ready to speak to diversity/inclusion/power/privilege in their bios, or integrate more inclusion language into the city website, that could also signal/model a shift in culture.

#### **Build Processes that foster equity and inclusion**

- Be intentional about bridging the divide. Facilitated conversations. Interested in recovering from animosity of elections. Could be a series of focus groups. Could be online survey. Finding out what matters most to constituents by end of year 1. Validate amount of hours, passion expended by many residents. What advice do you our citizens have for both sides of the charter? Housing crisis? Making all families feel welcome? How do we move forward as a city?
- Get a current indicator of community engagement through Surveys of "I feel like I belong"; "I have strong relationships with 3-5 others in this community"—with an eye to how to improve that in next 4 years.
- Commit to more civil language in "public squares"—consider a pledge for more civility in city council, consider how to make village 14, newton tab and community listservs more civil for all commenters which will increase participation of women and POC
- Consider review process after race incidents, like hospitals do for morbidity & mortality—to learn from what incidents happened and how they were handled

#### **Improve Outcomes on equity and inclusion**

- Measure diversity and equity in hiring rates, retention, level of position, etc of city employees
- New appointments and newly revitalized Human Rights Commission.
- More clarity around protocols for hate incident reporting at schools, police, and human rights commission
- Reduce actual number of racial incidents. Achieve an increase in trust as measured by general surveys or targeted surveys to those who log an incident.
- Greater number of people civically engaged.
- "squeaky wheels" deal with effectively so as not to have disproportionate impact on civic engagement (e.g. 320 complaints about leaf blowers april to October, 40% of the calls were from same 15 people)
- More city support for cultural festivals and other diverse gatherings—with MORE DIVERSE attendance achieved.
- Utilize existing events to have greater focus on creating conversation on our community
  - e.g. Newton North did a play about gentrification and race, they had a community discussion after, needs to be more widely publicized, perhaps also held over more nights, etc.
  - Superintendent is doing a forum on smartphone's impact on our youth—700 parents rsvp'd—could be a chance to do multiple forums to build more discussion and commitment within parent community
- Anti-hate initiatives that change how we talk about race/culture: possibly Not in our Town film showings, "one book one city" focused on immigration theme, etc.

- Strong public avowal of values from city hall—especially important when nationally our value of diversity feels in jeopardy. What form could it take? Maybe solicit ideas from community.
- Be able to hold a civil rights forum by end of year 1. Seek input and facilitation from experts in race and equity dialogues. All Newton leaders who are participating onstage need coaching and “practice” beforehand. Unlike the ugliness at the one Setti Warren held, this forum will be successful if it leads to productive discussion and positive feelings!!

#### **What should the Fuller administration accomplish in year 4:**

- Have researched and come up with models for our future: What city is like Newton in the country that is doing things that we want to do??
- Plan for how Newton will increase affordable housing and diversity, and play a leadership role in metro west Boston in addressing housing crisis and doing “our fair share”
- Improve the systemic cultural responsiveness training for NPS teachers, staff, and students.
- Improve inclusion assessments for METCO
- Hold ongoing community discussions across different groups, with lower stakes and more regularity than a big civil rights forum, these would have to be carefully planned with community leaders (e.g. RA, police chief, white/male city councilors, etc) ready to role model for it to be productive towards a shift towards inclusion.
- Ability to explicitly name and discuss institutional racism and the need to combat it in city policy. This should filter into fair housing/housing discrimination, affordable housing, METCO, school curriculum, economic development plans, etc.

#### **Multi-decade goal**

- We are less polarized; Newton is a model for how other communities can do better.
- We live in a healthy community where markedly fewer healthy young people are suffering from anxiety or suicidal ideation; and markedly fewer seniors are suffering from isolation.
- We have increased our diverse populations. Our diverse populations say that they feel welcomed.
- We have diverse leadership and substantially increase diverse representation on city council, school committee, local area councils, etc.
- We have built a substantial amount of affordable/workforce housing and helped ease the Boston housing crisis.
- There is a high engagement in our village centers, civic events, and city life.

#### **Potential partners specifically on diversity & inclusion**

- Not In Our Town was started as a vehicle for communities to come together after a hate incident happens, but it has many preventative ideas, too.
- Welcoming America helps people create welcoming communities for newcomers, especially immigrants.
- The ADL, Facing history, and Southern Poverty Law Center’s Teaching Tolerance both have solid curricula but primarily for schools not communities.

#### **Potential partners in better civic engagement dialogue generally, without a diversity focus**

- GOT History is a new initiative seeking pilot cities to renew civic commitment through enlisting librarians, parents, local leaders to practice civic storytelling and engaging with history within our community. They are partnering with Facing History and Welcoming America.
- David Moss, Newton resident and HBS professor, recently taught at Faneuil Hall and has been teaching gatherings of elected leaders, and training teachers to teach democracy case studies. Moss adapts the case method to revitalize conversations about governance and democracy and show how the United States has often thrived on political conflict.
- Non-violent communications experts can offer workshops to teach and practice better communication techniques that reduce tensions and increase agreement. Could be offered to city council, police department, NPS leaders, leaders of community groups, etc.

## Appendix

### **Excerpted from Washington Post “38 ideas to fix democracy/repair our community fabric”:**

“Find someone you talk to regularly who agrees with your politics about half the time.”

“Each state, city, nonprofit, faith community, school, team, group or family could come up with their own way of embracing differences and reaching past divides. National Unity Week would encourage strange bedfellows to serve their communities together and engage in the civil dialogue that our country so desperately needs”-- Romney political director:

“Let’s [offer] our citizenry the appreciation of beauty through artistic performance, which over time might allow us to connect on levels where differences in race, class and gender lose their insidious sway. For the space of an evening, beauty overwhelmed petty differences.”—poet Rita Dove

“If the answer to racial division is racial unity, the answer to racist demagoguery is courageous leadership in the very face of that hate.” —George Takei, actor, writer, survivor of Japanese internment camps

“We need to mobilize a movement of news consumers to enable members of the public to take charge of their news consumption, distinguish between real and fraudulent news, and counteract the threat to our discourse”—Suzanne Nossel, PEN America

### **Excerpt from New York Times, Justin Wolfers, “Pinpointing Racial Discrimination by Government Officials”:**

A team of economists has uncovered persuasive evidence that local government officials throughout the United States are less responsive to African-Americans than they are to whites...The researchers sent roughly 20,000 emails to local government employees in nearly every county. The emails posed commonplace questions, like “Could you please tell me what your opening hours are?”...The tendency to ignore emails sent by African-Americans was particularly pronounced in sheriffs’ offices, but it was also evident in school districts and libraries. The racial gap in email response rates was greater in counties where the proportion of whites was higher.

### **Excerpt from Atlantic Monthly, Nov 2016, Eric Liu, “the Practice of Civic Engagement”:**

There’s no single line of culpability that leads to a single large group of living Americans being called perpetrators. This is true of the legacy of African American enslavement. It is also true of all the power imbalances now creating tectonic pressures in our politics: the squeezing of local labor by global capital, the formation of a meritocratic elite detached from everyday Americans, the rigging of public policy to benefit that elite, the depopulation of the middle class, the relative decline of whites and the rise of the rest.

You can’t easily get to reconciliation without truth. But in America you can’t easily get to truth. A South African-style process here would only amplify our divisions. That’s why I propose a different way forward. It involves three steps: more listening, more serving, and—perhaps counterintuitively—more arguing.

Imagine forming citizen “talking circles” all across the country, where people of differing world views agree simply to listen to one another. The point would not be persuasion or conversion. The point would be presence. And the method would not be to discuss ideology explicitly. It would be to address a simple universal question—something like “Who influenced you, and how do you pass it on?”

This brings us to the second step: doing stuff together. This is the genius of national service. It gets you and me together not to work on you or me but on a third thing. That thing can be cleaning an abandoned lot, tutoring immigrants, helping disabled seniors, preventing youth suicide—whatever it is, if it brings people together across lines of race, class, and politics, it will bring to the fore our common humanity.

Imagine if in public libraries civic clubs and other such spaces we taught ourselves how to argue better, how to identify and name our foundational fights over principle, how to argue all sides and not just one’s own, how to change one’s own mind as well as another’s, and how to put together solutions that draw from each pole of principle—as if we had responsibility for solutions, not just posturing.

### **Excerpt from an email dialogue with Mike Feldstein, NPS teacher, and responsible for delivering anti-racism coaching to school principals and staff at Newton public schools:**



"Years ago, while reading David Wellman's Portraits of White Racism I found a great definition of racism that is applicable to many -isms. "Finding the culturally acceptable way to maintain privilege." I think that this is what is happening with many issues today. People find all kinds of reasons not to move forward with a progressive idea - and on the surface the reasoning is logical, thoughtful, righteous, etc....but in the end nothing changes and privilege remains. If people had racist reasons for not wanting affordable housing then there would be a reaction; but instead, if they come up with a variety of culturally acceptable reasons - they won't be called racists/elitists/etc.

Wellman encourages the reader to focus on outcome, not intent. In a school setting, I have often heard many reasons and explanations as to why there are not more teachers of color. All explanations (excuses) seem logical and fair....but on some level the reasons don't matter, the outcome is that we do not have teachers of color. It doesn't matter if these reasons are the same or different than someone like David Duke. In the Newtons of the world, we hear about all of the job fairs recruiters went to, the outreach to colleges, etc etc....so basically, again, finding the "culturally acceptable" ways to continue to have a very white staff. With the staffing issue, people should look at outcomes - hiring rates, retention, level of position, etc.

Perhaps we could look at affordable housing issues the same way. No matter the intent, we still are not building as much affordable housing as we should. Perhaps discussions should focus on outcomes. When a culturally acceptable reason is given as to why it is not a good idea, the next question should focus on how to remove that obstacle and keep moving forward.

From my years of experience, having tried time and again to making people feel discomfort with their privilege was not that successful. Obviously this idea makes sense - before you can address privilege, people have to see it and understand how it affects them... although some people are moved with that approach, many others become defensive. More recently, I have found if people continue to engage in these discussions, eventually they will come to a level of discomfort on their own terms and it will be a lot more meaningful."

*Contributor: Betty Chan*

## **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee**

### **Background**

Newton's ethnic and cultural demographics continue to evolve, it is now time for the City to establish a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee to examine how these demographic changes may impact civic involvement, City and School programs and community life in Newton.

Further, it is important that the Committee Chairperson be a person of color and has expertise in the field of racial diversity theory, since the focus is on racial diversity and how to have the City be more reflective of the communities of color and how to integrate Asian Americans, as the largest ethnic minority group, into the social fabric of Newton. Newton already has a LGBTQ Liaison and the senior population is represented with the Department of Senior Services and Council of Aging.

Also, attached is a recent study, "Discrimination in America: Experiences and views of Asian Americans" done in November, 2017 to show that Asian Americans are still marginalized and have personally experienced various forms of individual discrimination because of their race or ethnicity. The City must work on changing this racial divide and make the City a truly inclusive City. Lexington is a leader in this effort and has produced a study by a subcommittee of their Diversity Advisory Task Force to examine how to integrate their significant Asian American population into their Town life.

### **Proposal**

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee will make recommendations to the Mayor, the City Council, School Committee and Planning Board on potential municipal and school actions and activities that will ensure respect for all Newtonites, regardless of age, race, sexual orientation and identity, religious beliefs, mental and physical ability, and marital/family status.

Newton has a growing population of Asian Americans and Asian Americans were 13% from 2010 statistics and it is now 18% in the school system. But Asian Americans are still underrepresented in elected and appointed City bodies. The challenges remain in achieving a more complete cultural integration and blending into the existing social fabric of the community. In comparison, cities and towns with similar socioeconomic status and significant Asian American populations have instituted organizations to meet these challenges. Brookline has a Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations Department that reports to the Town Manager. Lexington has a Diversity Advisory Task Force. Other towns such as Needham and Wellesley have also instituted diversity initiatives.

### **Purpose**

To be a body of experts that will advise the Mayor and Superintendent of Schools on potential municipal and school actions and activities.

Promote a culture that embraces the richness of Newton's ethnic diversity as an important element of a healthy and vibrant community.

Foster civic engagement of all residents and mutual respect for the contributions that every individual or group makes toward community goals.

Ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for all.

Suggest programs or activities that will promote a culture of respect for all persons regardless of age, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious beliefs, marital/family status

and mental or physical ability.

## **Executive Summary**

### **Survey Background**

This report is part of a series titled "Discrimination in America." The series is based on a survey conducted for National Public Radio, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. The survey was conducted January 26 - April 9, 2017, among a nationally representative, probability-based telephone (cell and landline) sample of 3,453 adults age 18 or older. The survey included nationally representative samples of African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, whites, men, women, and LGBTQ adults. This report presents the results specifically for a nationally representative probability sample of 500 Asian American adults. Other reports will analyze each other group, and the final report will discuss major highlights from the series.

Discrimination is a prominent and critically important matter in American life and throughout American history. While many surveys have explored Americans' beliefs about discrimination, this survey asks people about their own personal experiences with discrimination.

### **Summary: Personal Experiences of Discrimination**

Overall, Asian Americans report numerous personal experiences of discrimination, across many areas of life. In the context of institutional forms of discrimination, a quarter or more of Asian Americans say they have been personally discriminated against because they are Asian when applying for jobs (27%), when being paid equally or considered for promotions (25%), and when trying to rent or buy housing (25%).

In the context of individual forms of discrimination, about a third of Asian Americans say they have personally experienced racial or ethnic slurs (32%) and people making negative assumptions or insensitive or offensive comments about their race or ethnicity (35%).

Non-immigrant Asian Americans are significantly more likely than their immigrant counterparts to report multiple forms of individual discrimination, including threats or non-sexual harassment, sexual harassment, and violence. Immigrants, however, are more likely to report experiencing discrimination when seeking healthcare.

Asian Americans with a college degree are more than twice as likely (25%) as those without a college degree (12%) to report being discriminated against when interacting with police. They are also more likely (41%) to report having experienced insensitive or offensive comments about their race or ethnicity, compared to Asian Americans without a college degree (25%).

### **Summary: Perceptions of Local Community**

In partial contrast to personal experiences, Asian Americans most frequently say that, where they live, other Asian Americans are "often" discriminated against are when being paid equally or considered for promotions (12%) and when applying to or attending college (11%).

Generally, a majority of Asian Americans believe that Asian people in their neighborhood have roughly equal educational and employment opportunities. However, 28% of Asian Americans believe that, where they live, Asians have fewer employment opportunities simply because they are Asian American, and 40% believe that Asians are paid less than white people for equal work.

Asian Americans were also asked whether elements of their neighborhood are better, worse, or about the same as other places to live. Asian Americans most frequently rate the amount of crime and the availability of grocery stores as "better." The availability of public transportation, the quality of available housing, and the availability of parks, green spaces, and recreational areas are most frequently rated as "worse."

### **Summary: National Beliefs &: Political Contact**

Overall, 61% of Asian Americans believe that there is discrimination against Asian Americans in the U.S. today, and younger Asian Americans are significantly more likely to believe such discrimination exists.

Among all those who believe anti-Asian discrimination exists in America today, a two-thirds majority (68%) say that discrimination based on the prejudice of individual people is the bigger problem, while only 14% say discrimination based in laws and government policies is the bigger problem. Another 16% say both are equally problematic.

With regard to party affiliation, 35% of Asian Americans describe themselves as Democrat, 35% identify as Independent, 14% as Republican, and 7% as other. There are significant variations in party affiliation by Asian ethnicity.

Finally, 41% of Asian Americans say that in the past year, they have been personally contacted by representatives of a political party, candidate, organization, or ballot issue encouraging them to vote or support their cause in an election. Being personally contacted in this way may lead to increased likelihood of voting or other forms of civic or political participation.

These findings illustrate that Asian Americans report and perceive discrimination across a wide range of areas of life. They also highlight that lower income and non-immigrant Asian Americans are more likely to report various experiences and perceptions of discrimination.

Acknowledge

Needham Diversity Advisory Task Force

Brookline Diversity, Inclusion & Community Relations Office

Researchers for the Asian American Research Project

*Contributors: Anne Josephson, Katie Herzog, Cheryl Harris, Robert Parlin*

## **Hate Speech or Bias Incidents**

### **Introduction**

#### **The Need for a City-Wide Transparent and Effective Protocol**

In 2016, our country experienced a dramatic spike in the number of bias incidents – a trend that made itself clear at every level of our society, national, state and local:

According to the FBI, the number of hate crimes substantially increased nationwide in 2016. Based upon 2016 statistics for the New England region, the greatest number of hate crimes occurred in Massachusetts.

After the 2016 Presidential election, reports of hate and bias incidents increased so notably in Massachusetts that the Attorney General's office established a dedicated hot line to address them. Just recently, in further response, Governor Baker revived the Commonwealth's Hate Crimes Task Force. See, Executive Order No. 578 (November 10, 2017).

According to data maintained by the Newton Police Department, reported hate and bias incidents in our own community increased **five-fold** from 2015 to 2016. Most of these incidents occurred in Newton public schools.

We know that the statistics demonstrate only part of the problem, as these types of incidents are substantially underreported.

As the Anti-Defamation League recently noted, hate crimes and bias incidents “demand priority attention because of their special impact: they not only hurt the victim, but they also intimidate and isolate the victim's whole community, and, in doing so, weaken the bonds of our society.” We cannot let this happen.

We are well aware that, for Newton to be the best city it can be, it is not enough simply to **respond** well to hate and bias incidents as they arise. We must also, as a community, focus on **prevention**. Fully embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion is an ongoing process, and requires an ongoing commitment. Much can be done through neighborhood events, facilitated discussions, and other concerted efforts to come together and get to know each other as neighbors. The Best Practices Protocol set forth herein is not a substitute for ongoing community-building efforts. The Protocol is offered as a necessary part of such efforts.

#### **Methods Used to Develop the Proposed “Best Practices” Protocol**

The Protocol set forth in this document is the result of months of research and discussion, with the goal of identifying “best practices” in this area. Our Steering Committee reviewed the available literature on the subject of effective responses to hate and bias incidents and we compiled information about what other communities have done. We reviewed statistical data, gathered information about applicable legal requirements, and followed up with personal phone calls and interviews with experts in the field. We have also spoken with several city officials about what Newton has done in the past, and have noted their views about what has worked well and what still needs to be done.

We are grateful to the many Newton residents and officials who have provided us with information and insights about the city's approach to bias incidents and hate speech.

We also thank the many thought leaders and experts in the field who have generously taken time to review our work, to encourage us, and to provide thoughtful feedback. These include, so far:

Professor Jack McDevitt, co-author, *Hate Crimes Revisited – America’s War on Those Who Are Different*, Westview Press (2002)

Jonathan Miller, Assistant Attorney General

Genevieve Nadeau, Assistant Attorney General, Chief of the Civil Rights Division

Laura Maslow Armand, Staff Attorney, Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice

Patrice O’Neill, Executive Director, “Not In Our Town”

Rebecca Shuster, Assistant Superintendent for Equity, Boston Public Schools

Hon. James Wexler, Associate Justice of the District Court (Retired)

### **Underlying Principles**

The “Best Practices” Protocol set forth below is based upon the following principles and understandings: Experts are in agreement that, in order to prevent hate crimes and bias incidents from escalating (either in number or in the seriousness of the offense), it is important for communities to provide a thoughtful response. In other words, it is counterproductive (and, indeed, detrimental to our sense of community) to ignore such incidents in the hope that they will go away.

According to the experts, any effective response protocol must include the following elements: condemnation of the behavior by city leaders; commitment of the Police Department to take bias incidents seriously; and community support for the targets of hate and bias incidents. Our Protocol contains each of these elements.

Research indicates that hate and bias incidents are significantly under-reported. As such, our Protocol incorporates strategies to encourage the reporting and appropriate documentation of these incidents.

There is currently no city-wide, transparent, coordinated protocol for reporting and/or responding to hate speech and bias incidents. . Our Protocol outlines the key elements that must be in place for there to be an effective response.

There is currently no office or officer charged with the responsibility to implement a city-wide, coordinated response to hate speech and bias incidents. Given the nature and scope of the task, we call on the Mayor to designate such an office or position. A job description should be developed, to ensure that the person charged with the responsibility for implementing the Protocol has the necessary judgment, training, experience, and skill to perform the role successfully.

We recognize that there is a difference between “hate crimes” and non-criminal bias incidents involving “hate speech.” Indeed, we recognize that pure “speech” – even speech that we might find abhorrent - enjoys the protection of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Our Protocol takes these considerations into account.

In particular, we proceed from the conviction that we **must** speak out and support the victims of hate in the face of speech that denigrates people for who they are, where they come from, or who they love. There is nothing in the First Amendment that prevents us from doing that. Indeed, the most avid defenders of our First Amendment right to free speech make clear that the antidote to hate speech is **more** speech. Our democracy works best, and our communities are stronger, when we stand up to expressions of hate - when we make clear that this kind of speech does not reflect our values.

### **The Protocol**

#### **ELEMENT 1: RAISE COMMUNITY AWARENESS ABOUT HOW TO REPORT INCIDENTS OF BIAS OR HATE SPEECH**

1. Enhance the City of Newton website to encourage reporting, either to an office or officer in the Mayor’s Office, to the Newton Police Department, or to vetted alternatives such as the Attorney General’s Office Division of Civil Rights, Anti-Defamation League, the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Social Justice, and GLAD.

2. Under the direction of the Mayor's Office, ensure that a similar protocol be developed, adopted, and implemented in the Newton Public Schools.
3. Under the direction of the Mayor's Office, clarify and coordinate the lines of communication to and from all reporting sources, including the Schools, the Police Department, and vetted alternatives.
4. Consider the impact of public records requirements as well as language access issues, to mitigate potential barriers to reporting.
5. Create and implement an ongoing information campaign to ensure that Newton residents are aware of the reporting opportunities available to them in the event that they witness (or are subjected to) a bias incident or hate speech.

## **ELEMENT 2: DOCUMENT EACH REPORT, MAINTAIN RECORDS, AND TRACK TRENDS**

1. Ensure appropriate documentation by law enforcement, consistent with G.L. c. 22C, 32, et seq. and 501 CMR 400.
2. Ensure appropriate documentation by the Mayor's Office.

3. Ensure that advocacy organizations serving as alternative reporting sites provide information to the Mayor's Office about incidents reported to them.

Documentation should be maintained on each reported incident, whether or not it rises to the level of criminal conduct. Data should be sufficient to identify trends regarding the frequency, nature, and groups targeted in the incidents reported each year. Data collected should include the ages and demographics of both perpetrators and targets. An annual report should be presented to the City Council.

## **ELEMENT 3: CONDUCT A PROMPT PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE THE NATURE, SEVERITY, AND SCOPE OF THE INCIDENT; SCREEN OUT REPORTS THAT ARE CLEARLY UNFOUNDED**

1. The Mayor's Office and the Superintendent must identify an individual who responsible for investigating incidents in each school. That individual must be one who has the training, judgment and experience to conduct such an investigation. Ideally, one individual should be designated from the entire school system to oversee and coordinate the response protocols for each school.
2. The Mayor's Office must identify an individual who is responsible for investigating incidents that arise in the community, outside of the Schools. That individual must be one who has the training, judgment and experience to conduct such an investigation.
3. The Mayor's Office, in collaboration with the Superintendent's Office must develop a communication plan, consistent with ELEMENT 4, that provides necessary information to the community; that preserves the integrity of the ongoing investigation; and that protects the rights of all involved.

## **ELEMENT 4: COMMUNICATE CONDEMNATION OF THE BEHAVIOR AS CONTRARY TO OUR VALUES. THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE COMMUNICATION SHOULD BE COMMENSURATE WITH THE EVENT.**

1. The Mayor's Office will determine the substance of the communication, in consultation with the target and other involved stakeholders. Samples are available from the Southern Poverty Law Center and from the Anti-Defamation League.
2. The Mayor's Office r will determine the medium of communication. Depending upon the circumstances, this can range anywhere from a private statement to the target to a press release to the community, to a rally and/or forum.
3. The Mayor's Office will determine the scope of community involvement, in consultation with the target and other stakeholders. Depending upon the circumstances, this can range anywhere from having a private conversation with the target to alerting members of the target's supporting community (such as family, neighbors, or clergy), to organizing a city-wide event. To facilitate a prompt and effective

response, community leaders (such as members of the City Council, members of the clergy, business leaders, etc.) should be made aware in advance that they may be called upon in these instances.

**ELEMENT 5: ENSURE THAT THE POLICE DEPARTMENT HAS MADE CLEAR, THAT IT TREATS HATE SPEECH AND BIAS INCIDENTS AS POTENTIAL THREATS TO PUBLIC SAFETY, AND THAT IT STANDS READY TO PROSECUTE CRIMINAL CONDUCT THAT IS MOTIVATED BY HATE OR BIAS.**

**ELEMENT 6: ENSURE THAT A PROMPT AND THOROUGH INVESTIGATION PROCEEDS, AND THAT THE PERPETRATORS FACE APPROPRIATE CONSEQUENCES WHEREVER POSSIBLE**

1. Incidents that are criminal in nature will be handled by the Police Department and the District Attorney.
2. When incidents occur that are not criminal in nature, steps should be taken to require perpetrators to participate in training to educate them about the history and current realities of the target group's oppression, civil rights laws and policies, and the impact of their actions. Referrals to qualified trainers are available from the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination's training unit.

**ELEMENT 7: WHERE MEMBERS OF PARTICULAR GROUPS ARE TARGETED, PROVIDE NEIGHBORHOOD/COMMUNITY SUPPORT.**

The Mayor's Office, in consultation with the target and other stakeholders, will offer a range of support to the target. Depending upon the circumstances, support can take the form of a sincere thank you for the report, to alerting the target's support network, to organizing a full, city-wide response (such as a rally, a vigil, series of facilitated discussions). To facilitate community support, community leaders (members of the clergy, business leaders, etc.) should be made aware in advance that they may be called upon in these instances.

**ELEMENT 8: DOCUMENT AND REPORT THE OUTCOME OF THE INVESTIGATION AND THE COMMUNITY RESPONSE**

The Mayor's Office should document and track all bias incidents and the response thereto, as described in **ELEMENT 2**. Consider sharing the data, and conclusions drawn therefrom, in a press release or other public forum.

**ELEMENT 9: ASSESS THE PROTOCOL ON AN ANNUAL BASIS (OR MORE FREQUENTLY IF NECESSARY) TO IDENTIFY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

## **About the Authors**

**We are:**

The Steering Committee to Confront Hate Speech and Bias Incidents in Newton.

**Our Mission**

In response to hate and bias incidents in our community, we seek to build awareness and provide effective response protocols, to ensure that all Newton residents feel safe and welcome.

**Our First Year Goals**

1. To have the City of Newton adopt a systemic, coordinated, and transparent protocol in response to incidents of bias and hate in the community.
2. To have all members of the City Council participate in anti-bias training.

**Our Steering Committee**

**Anne Josephson, Chair**



Anne Josephson is an attorney whose practice concentrates on employment law and litigation. Anne is the co-founder of the Amicus Group, a coalition of civil rights organizations that advocate for strong civil rights enforcement, particularly in the area of workplace discrimination. In addition to representing individual clients, Anne has written and taught extensively about workplace discrimination. She has served as a trainer for employers who seek to ensure compliance with antidiscrimination laws, and as an investigator of workplace discrimination complaints.

**Rev. Cheryl Harris**

Reverend Cheryl Harris is pastor of First Baptist Church of Attleboro. She is also CEO of her consulting firm, Cheryl Harris and Associates, Inc., which focuses on diversity and inclusion, and leadership coaching. Harris has the distinction of being the co-developer of the Boston City-Wide Dialogues on Racial and Ethnic Diversity. The 2003 curriculum is still in use today and is now housed with the Boston YWCA. Reverend Harris received a Master of Divinity degree from Boston University School of Theology and a BA in English Literature from Emmanuel College.

**Katherine Herzog**

Katie Herzog, President of Eastern Point Consulting Group, is a management consultant with particular expertise in diversity, harassment prevention and leadership development. Katie provides executive coaching and consultation to senior management. Katie designs and delivers training programs to support a diverse and inclusive culture in corporations, law firms, and non-profit organizations. Prior to founding Eastern Point, Katie served as Senior Vice President of Ibis Consulting Group, professor of psychology for Lesley College's graduate school, President of The Boston Women's Fund, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Boston Management Consortium which provided consultation to the City of Boston including the police department, health and hospitals and the Mayor's Office.

**Robert Parlin**

Bob Parlin has been a history teacher at Newton South High School for the past thirty years. As well as co-founding the nation's first public school gay/straight alliance, Bob has conducted diversity trainings for faculty from more than 400 schools, helped to create the MA Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students, and was the co-founder of GLSEN, the country's largest LGBTQ+ organization focused on safety in schools. Last year, Bob and several colleagues developed an anti-hate speech program for all students to respond to the growing number of bias incidents at Newton South.

## Chapter 2B:

### Public Safety & Public Health

#### Committee Members

Nicole Castillo

Al Cecchinelli

David Jellinek

Howard Mintz

Tyrone Powell

#### Overview

Among the spectrum of issues facing any mayor addressing Public Health and Public Safety in the City of Newton, our subcommittee focused on specific areas that include:

1. the Police and Fire Departments;
2. Our community's opioid crisis;
3. City response to emergencies and acute crises;
4. Community response to domestic violence;
5. The overlap between roads, transportation, and public safety.

A consistent theme as the City confronts any of these issues is the critical need for collaboration between departments in the City. For every issue noted above, multiple departments – police, fire, public health, social services – in their training, planning and response need to work together to use the limited resources of the City most efficiently and to respond most effectively.

Our subcommittee drafted a list of priority actions, keeping in mind fiscal, cultural and political factors:

#### Immediate Issues (Year One)

##### **Diversion Clinician for the City (assigned to the Police Department)**

###### *Addresses Opioid and Mental Health Priorities*

The Police Department recently lost a critical “diversion clinician.” This social worker played a pivotal role in the community, helping to prevent or “divert” unnecessary arrests and directing potential defendants to mental health treatment or other services. This individual also accompanied the police on visits to the last known address of every person who overdosed in our community.[1] The City needs to hire a new diversion clinician.

##### **Training and Professional development for Public Safety Personnel**

The City needs to increase the training and professional development budgets of the Police and Fire departments. We should encourage our Police and Fire personnel to constantly improve by offering effective trainings. Further, such opportunities will demonstrate the City's commitment to this sector, as well as Newton's desire to help public safety personnel in professional development. This is also an area where increased collaboration among the various City departments is critical and could save

resources.[2] Trainings have been suggested in the following areas, among others: intergenerational relations, implicit bias, cyber security & internet crime, and gender and diversity issues. Police and Fire should also be acknowledged and appreciated in the inaugural address.

#### **Collaboration and support for better substance use disorder data collection**

Lack of data on substance use disorder and overdoses remains a significant issue. We need to understand more about where the incidents occur and where the individuals using services in Newton are coming from. This requires working with the various sources of data to coordinate. Chief MacDonald reports that there is a pilot program with specialized software for this purpose, but training and implementation is required.

#### **Create multiple, free sharp waste drop off locations**

Used needles are a significant problem in the community. We recommend creating multiple locations for addicts or residents to confidentially and safely dispose of sharps. This should be addressed quickly, but will require study regarding optimum locations and processes.

### **Intermediate Issues (Years One to Four)**

#### **Substation**

The Police department needs a **substation on the south-side**. Currently there are no facilities for female police officers to use after hours. The location could also be another convenient location for drafting reports, break time, etc. Perhaps this is another area where inter-departmental cooperation could lead to cost savings, with the fire department or schools able to offer space.

#### **Hire two recovery coaches and expand access to services**

We recommend hiring *at least* two recovery coaches to support referral from the NPD, Newton-Wellesley Hospital, Schools, and the community. Further, there remains a gap in services to address individuals with substance use disorder, whether the person has first contact with the schools, Police, Fire, EMS, or another community source (direct service providing non-profits, individuals, etc.) These recovery coaches could also provide critical support to those dealing with any substance use disorder in any department in the city, for example working in the schools to deal with alcohol abuse.

#### **Improve Domestic Violence Response**

- **Affordable housing** remains a critical public health issue for survivor of domestic violence. Additionally, community members report that there have been several incidents where clients were not able to receive housing due to discriminatory practices by landlords. Reinvigorating the city's Fair Housing Committee will be important to addressing this issue.
- **Support coordinated service efforts.** It is very difficult to coordinate services for clients among the city's various service-providing organizations. The City should investigate playing a larger role in helping to provide a hub for resources (online via the city's website, a committee, or possibly a liaison).
- **Explore high risk DV team.** The City should explore forming a high risk domestic violence team to coordinate services and implement best practices for dealing with the most severe cases of domestic violence. The Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center based out of Newburyport provides one of the most comprehensive, nationally-known models. <http://www.dvhrt.org>

### **Longer Term/Exploratory Issues (Years 1-8)**

#### **Public Health/Public Safety Liaison**

Someone who can coordinate efforts between the NPD, NFD, public works, PATH, HHS the high schools to coordinate work between and across departments. The liaison could also research, schedule, implement trainings for NPD on implicit bias, continuing education & professional development.

- Could result in overall cost savings (coordinating trainings, other purchasing, etc.)

- Could assist in data collection collaborations.
- Could replace daily check in meetings for Chiefs and create a new reporting structure for more minor/day to day issues.
- NOT intended to replace Chief's direct reporting to/contact with the Mayor

### **Community health center**

Explore creating a community health center in Newton to provide cheaper doctors and visits; could also be a cost savings for city employee coverage; could also provide discounted childcare. Location? Possibly the Aquinas School, could share space with new senior center.

### **Cross-Department Meeting Participation**

Encourage relevant school staff (and possibly school committee members) to attend public safety meetings.

### **City-Wide Response**

Explore city's response(s) to climate change, natural disaster, and emergency response. Form a committee to explore what could be improved, how the public can be notified, etc.[3]

### **Streets**

Work with public safety officials to understand the role complete streets design plays in improving public safety, how complete streets supports public safety.

### **Mayor-elect outreach to Police and Fire**

Work throughout to meet with, unify, and improve morale in the various public safety departments.

### **24 hour hotline**

Study creating a 24-hour local hotline where individuals can get information regarding area local referrals, Narcan, shared needle disposal, and connect with a recovery coach. Share this resource with neighboring municipalities to reduce cost?

### **Provide subsidized Narcan**

Empower recovery coaches and social worker to train and give certs to people at risk to get subsidized Narcan from the city.

### **Improve/Expand whistleblower protections**

Study the benefits of providing a more generalized emergency whistleblower immunity in the city (e.g., immunity for all teens at a party if a peer calls emergency services for an overdosed friend.)

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[1] The Police department also notes that due to various national political dynamics the cost of opiates may rise, thus leading to increased property crime and exacerbating the crisis locally.

[2] For example, if the school department is having an implicit bias training for teachers and administrative staff, the Police officers who work in the schools should attend, and others should be invited. Similarly, if the Police are having a valuable disaster response training, school and Fire officials should attend.

[3] See, e.g, **TCE contamination in Nonantum - how bad is the problem and what should be done?**  
<http://newton.wickedlocal.com/news/20160927/state-identifies-likely-source-of-tce-contamination-in-nonantum>

## Chapter 2C:

### Transportation & Infrastructure

#### Committee Members

Alicia Bowman

Aaron Goldman

Lois Levin

Srdjan S. Nedeljkovic

Nathan Phillips

Sydra Schnipper

#### Overview

Newton has developed excellent transportation planning documents in recent years. Newton's Comprehensive Plan (2008) outlines the broad vision for improving mobility while maintaining quality of life in the city. Subsequently, the Mixed-Use Task Force provided guidance on transport sensitive design for mixed-use development (2009). The Transportation Advisory Committee (2011) made recommendations about governance, safety, bicycle accommodations, complete streets, design classification, transit, youth and senior travel, parking, and urban fabric as it relates to transportation. Subsequently, the Transportation Advisory Group was charged to create a forum for resident interactions in the city's decision-making and other processes regarding transportation.

More recently, the City of Newton has developed an outline of Transportation Strategy, *Newton in Motion* (2017), issuing a report *Newton 2040: A Transportation Strategy for Newton*. In this report, five priorities are described: a roads program, village enhancements, bike facilities, shared transit, and smart parking management. The document outlines strategies for safe travel, transit, active transportation, parking management, congestion reduction, processes and prioritization, and suggests implementing actions.

As members of Mayor-elect Fuller's transition team charged with providing recommendations about transportation, we wish to utilize the rich background of policies and steps as articulated in these and other existing planning documents. We intend to incorporate key recommendations from these documents propose key steps which the mayor may take to reach our goals of a sustainable transportation system that meets the needs of Newton's residents.

This document is a highlight of what we feel needs to be done. The timing did not allow for thorough discussion and agreement on all of the items or even how to present them. We would all be happy to continue advising Mayor Fuller on these issues.

#### What should the Fuller administration accomplish in Year 1?

The Fuller administration should work towards updating and implementing the transportation plans and policies that have been thoughtfully considered and developed. Infrastructure is integrally linked with many transportation plans. It will be important to achieve consensus so that decision-making can be

made based on criteria supported by residents and city council that are rooted in sound transportation policy and meet city goals for investment in infrastructure. Improvements in transportation and infrastructure will have benefit for wide aspects of the city and help improve the quality of life of our residents and the success of our commercial and business districts.

- Work with residents, business owners, city staff and city councilors to establish/reconfirm city goals (plans suggest priority goals such as infrastructure investment, sustainability, safety, increased diversity, more affordable, age friendly). Continue to communicate these goals as a framework for all changes.
- Establish a separate Transportation Department that will have oversight and responsibility for all transportation decisions, including roadway design, bicycle network and facilities, pedestrian improvements including sidewalks and crossings, school transportation, transit, and other elements.
- Reauthorize citizen Transportation Advisory Group as this is a strong citizen engagement opportunity. There should be a strong working relationship with Transportation Director, School Committee members, Planning Department, Police and Fire officials and City Council. Provide more opportunities for other citizen engagement as part of this group. Consider formalizing TAG modeling on DRC with defined role and reporting structure.
- Continue with plans to renovate school buildings
- Review the CIP and the >200 projects that are being considered for planning purposes. Evaluate if any of these should be re-prioritized in terms of being a community amenity.
- Ensure Complete Streets Design Guide being developed for Newton is a strong tool for redesigning streets to be safer, more accessible and more functional for all road users. Ideally it would set minimum design standards that reduce roadway speeds, create safer crossings, more pleasant walking experience. **The guide should specifically address how to design to meet needs of our aging population** and our school zones. The guide should be rolled out with new planning, design and community engagement processes.
- Develop a detailed implementation plan for the Bicycle Master Plan. The full build-out of the Plan should be accomplished within 5 years. Establish a budget for completing it, similar to the sidewalk allocation.
- Complete a through sidewalk audit or other process to identify tripping hazards (also listed as a quick fix)
- Establish process to better manage the reconstruction of sidewalks and curb cuts to ensure safest design and that during reconstruction, continued safe pedestrian passage in the area is still possible. (also listed as a quick fix)
- Complete an audit of pedestrian crosswalk signals to ensure they meet the minimum crossing time. Identify key crossings that should be longer (high number of pedestrians, near schools, **seniors**, people with mobility issues). Identify ones that need to be prioritized for further redesign to increase pedestrian safety. (also listed as a quick fix)
- Many of our village centers are inadequately lighted, making them less welcoming during the night. Better lighting is necessary, especially in our village centers and at major street crossings in pedestrian zones and elsewhere.
- Identify what Newton could do to improve transit use and travel times within Newton. This might include traffic signal prioritization for buses, bus shelters, bus pull ins, dedicated bus lanes, bike parking at major hubs, real time updates, circulator to get people from homes and business to transportation hubs.
- Identify how to provide convenient, accessible and affordable transportation options for our aging residents to be engaged and for their physical and emotional health
- The mayor or a high-level delegate (ie, Director of Planning) should attend regional planning meetings such as those conducted at the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to advocate for Newton's priorities.
- Finance and Budgeting: Develop a dedicated funding source for achieving transportation goals, including Tax Increment Financing and District Improvement Financing as ways to create a revenue source for transportation and streetscape improvements. Other options may include utilizing funding from permitting for new development along with support from educational and non-profit organizations.

## What should the Fuller administration accomplish at the end of Year 4?

In years 2, 3 4, the hard work of implementation begins. Implementing these plans will require a stronger decision-making process that is more professionally driven vs. politically driven. The changes must support city goals and need to garner broad community support.

- Engage city staff, city councilors, residents and businesses in a highly collaborative process related to infrastructure and transportation projects
- Develop a plan to address aging gas line infrastructure to improve health of citizens, trees and impact on roadways caused by “emergency” repairs to gas lines
- Articulate a set of priorities for transit to communicate to the MBTA. These should include signal and track improvements on the Green line and commuter rail, accessibility of stations, long range planning to increase service on the commuter rail line and establish a Green line rail extension or connection that is cognizant of the active transportation value of the Upper Falls Greenway, and investment in certain bus corridors.
- Implement new school transportation policy that prioritizes walking, biking and public transportation over vehicle trips.
- Complete a comprehensive study of busing aimed at connecting where people live, work, shop and go to school. **The solutions should support our aging population.** The study should include looking for opportunities to leverage existing school transportation and create partnerships with the many existing shuttle services currently run by colleges and businesses in Newton.
- Comprehensively assess the potential of market-based transportation sharing economy tools and apps to address Newton's transportation needs and sustainability goals
- Continue work to address parking more comprehensively, both in village centers and on-street parking along desired bike routes.
- Create a master plan for all public buildings A master plan should be created for all public buildings, with a focus on establishing a maintenance plan.
- Establish a maintenance budget for public buildings
- Improve maintenance and facility upgrades at the main library
- Develop plan for improving technology and communication infrastructure
- Establish a working group to study the use of Aquinas, Horace Mann and Lincoln Eliot looking at them as public assets, not just public buildings.
- Create more development in village centers that supports more housing opportunities **especially those for an aging population** that puts them very close to amenities and public transportation

## Not on anyone's radar?

- Connect the city on foot and bike utilizing open spaces and quiet streets

## Something for another committee

- Work with public safety officials to understand the role complete streets design plays in improving public safety, how complete streets supports public safety
- Concentrate new housing in areas that already have transit options and then work to strengthen those options with additional transit

## Quick fix

- Establish process to better manage the reconstruction of sidewalks and curb cuts to ensure safest design and that during reconstruction, continued safe pedestrian passage in the area is still possible.

- Complete an audit of pedestrian crosswalk signals to ensure they meet the minimum crossing time. Identify key crossings that should be longer (high number of pedestrians, near schools, seniors, people with mobility issues). Identify ones that need to be prioritized for further redesign to increase pedestrian safety.
- Complete a through sidewalk audit or other process to identify tripping hazards

### **What processes will be important to accomplish these goals?**

It will be important to clearly articulate how these goals will be of benefit to Newton's residents. In addition, developers and commercial landowners will need to understand how these goals are beneficial to improving the economic climate in Newton. A significant public outreach program will be needed.

Close collaboration with state agencies and the MBTA will be necessary to implement the transit projects that will be beneficial not only to Newton but to the entire region.

Zoning reform and design guidance will be needed in order to meet the goals of context sensitive design of our streetscapes. The development of overlay districts in which transportation and transit are considered favorably will be supportive with regards to implementing existing policies

Creation of a Transportation Department and reassignment of duties and responsibilities away from other branches of government will require an ordinance change. This will require outreach to city councilors and a vigorous



## **Chapter 2D:**

### **An All - Age Friendly Newton**

#### **Committee Members**

Holly Gunner – Basic Research Data & Senior Mobility

Kalpana Guttman – Education, Lifelong Learning

Jennifer Huntington – Inclusion & Respect

Eli Katzoff – Millennial & Young Adults

Anne Larner – Transportation and Mobility

Jennifer Macintyre – Recreational Opportunities, Mid Life & Families

Chloe O'Neil (Newton North HS '18) – mid / school age

Angela Pitter-Wright – minority outreach & transportation

#### **Contributors**

Howard King – Seniors

Marian Knapp - Newton Council on Aging

Newton Department of Senior Services

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  - Four Year Recommendations
  - Transportation to Aftercare for Middle School students
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- ❖ **Holly Gunner**
- ❖ **Anne Larner**
- ❖ **Angela Pitter Wright**

NEWTON All Ages of Color – survey PDF attached

### Appendix & Bibliography

**Committee members:** Holly Gunner, Kalpana Guttman, Anne Larner, Jennifer Macintyre, Angela Pitter-Wright, - [Jennifer Huntington, Eli Katzoff, Chloe O'Neil are also members of the committee but submitting reports separately]

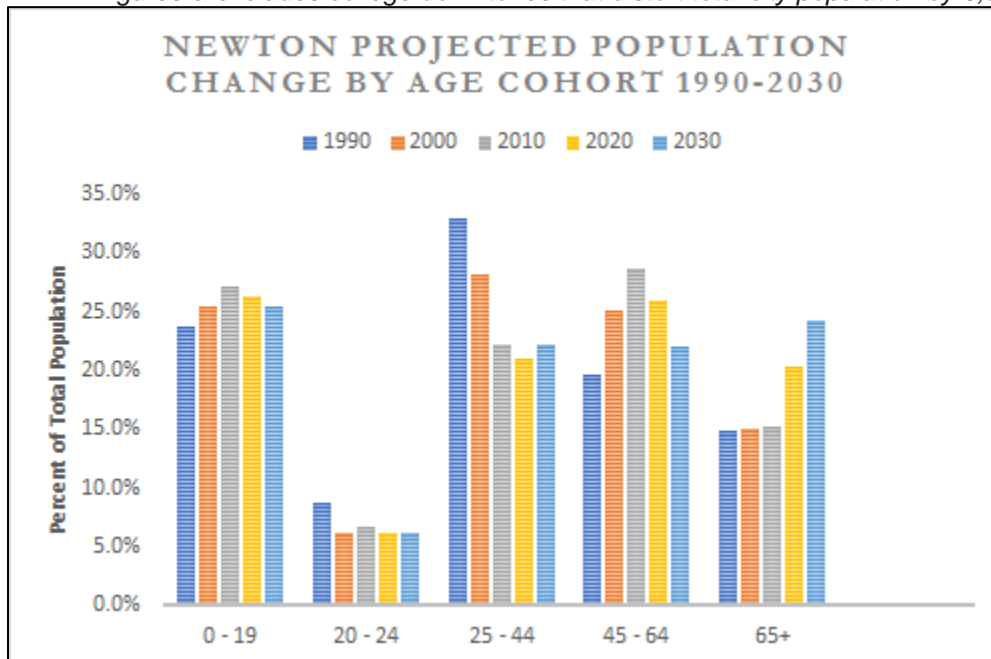
## Values&Vision

During her campaign, Mayor-elect Fuller stated that “Newton should be a diverse and inclusive community and a place of opportunity.” In that spirit, diversity, inclusivity and opportunity underline our recommendations. This vision assumes welcoming people of different economic status, races, cultures, sexual orientations, mental and physical abilities, and ages. An inclusive community depends on residents, groups and government working cooperatively to address common interests and takes a supportive approach to its most vulnerable citizens. Opportunity means the ability to be a full participant in city life, to grow, to learn, to connect and fulfill one’s potential. **To be a place of opportunity a city must have leadership willing to set an inclusive tone, open doors, build bridges and provide supports to children and adults looking for ways to prosper. Seeking and listening to a variety of opinions and viewpoints is a crucial first step.**

## Newton’s Demographics and Summary of Projection to 2030

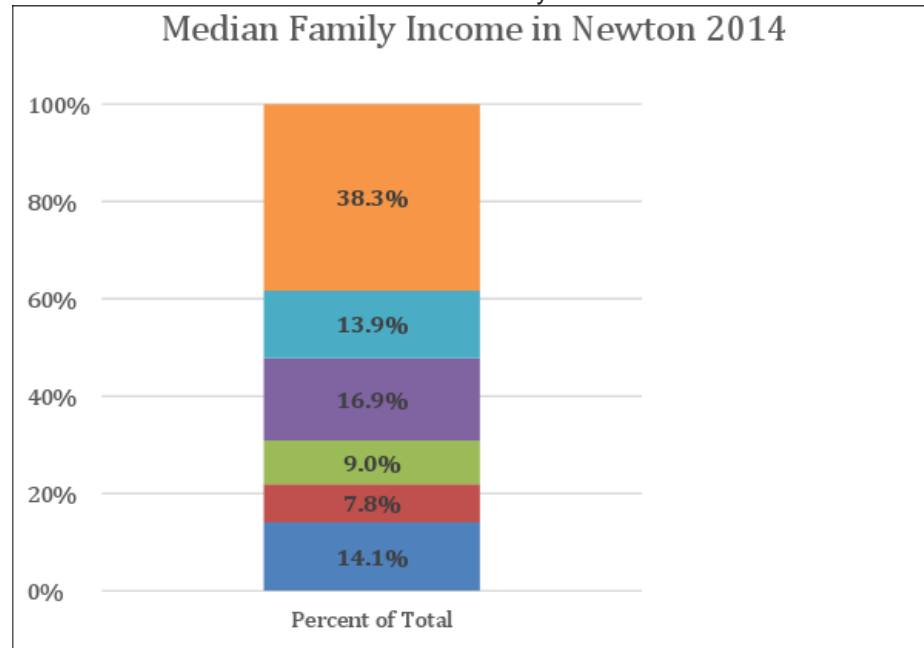
### A snapshot of Newton demographics

- From a peak of 92,000 in 1960 Newton lost 10,000 residents before reversing trends in 1990. By 2010 population had risen back to 85,000 and is projected to be close to 90,000 by 2030.
- The average household size has continued to decline even as the population rebounds. The size was 2.77 in 1980, 2.50 in 2010, and is expected to fall to 2.32 by 2030.
- The percent of population in various age cohorts is shifting significantly. **Seniors age 65 and older are increasing dramatically as a percentage of total population.** That increase is already well underway. [See section below on senior population growth that includes updated figures & excludes college dormitories that distort total city population by 6,000+.]



- **Since 1980 Newton has changed from a city that was 95% White to a city that is 20% minority – 12.3% Asian, 3.1% Black, 4.1% Hispanic, and 0.3% other.**
- Although in 2014 Newton’s median household income was \$118,639 and its median family income was \$156,411 putting it in a category of affluent suburbs, many households in the city struggled to make ends meet.

- 11% of Newton school children are living below the poverty line, a 77% increase over the past five years
- On average, more than 12% of Newton public school students qualify for free or reduced lunch, with over 25% of students in one Newton school qualifying for free or reduced lunch.
- Nearly one out of eight households in Newton is living on an annual income of less than \$25,000
- Newton has four food pantries serving more than 1200 residents per month. According to one food pantry, the numbers of residents served have more than doubled over the past several years
- More than 25% of residents age 65 and older report incomes under \$25,000 annually. And 6% are living below the federal poverty level.
- Newton has many people at the high end of the income scale and relatively few in the middle range, making lower income households stand out even more starkly.



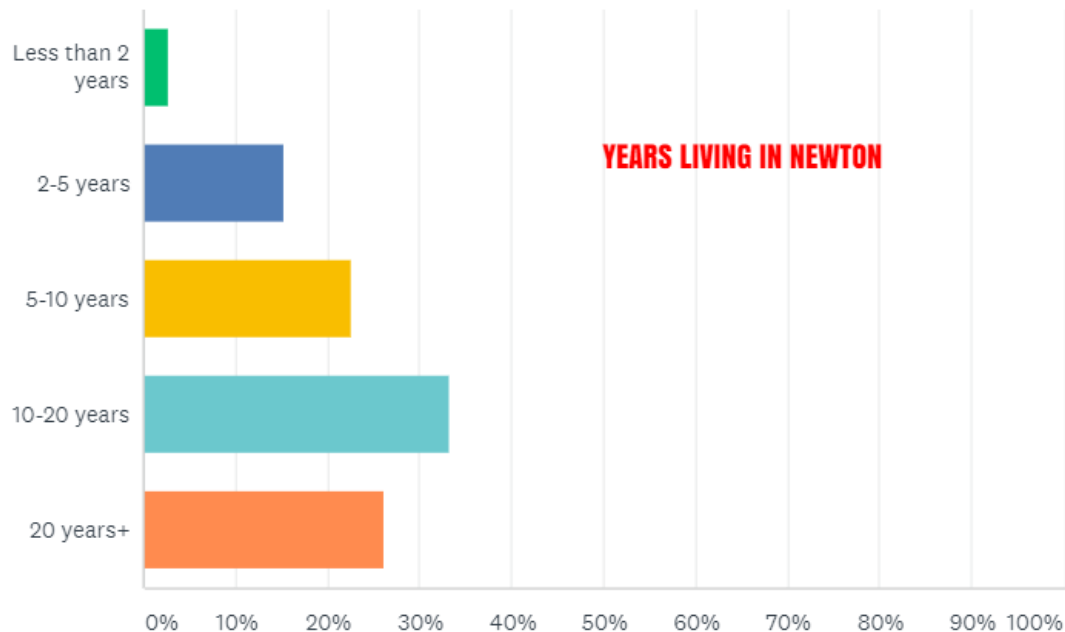
*Demographic data above from Bluestone & Corley demographic studies, 2014 (see Appendix for bibliography))*

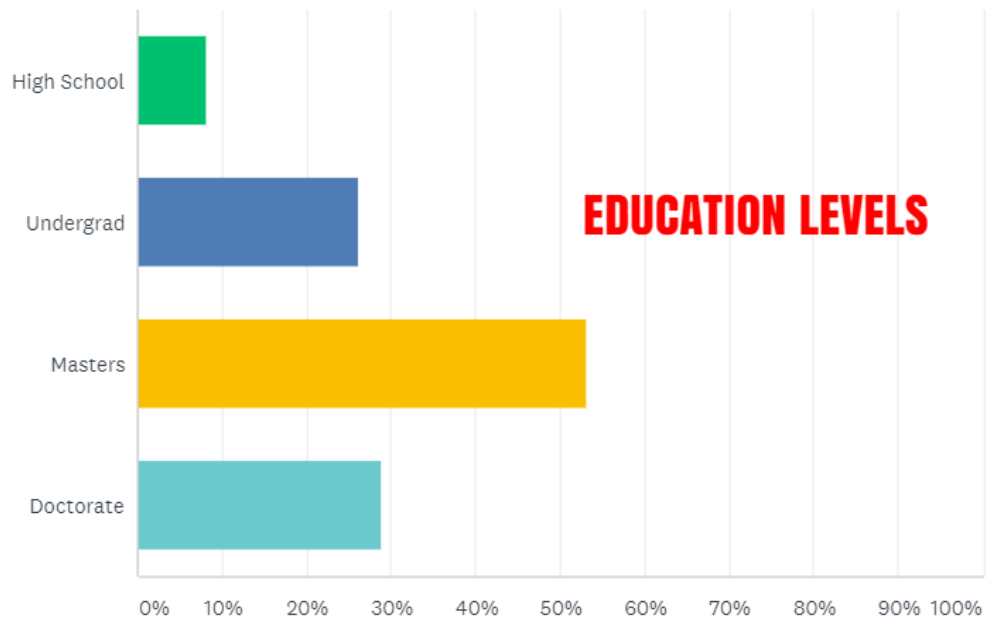
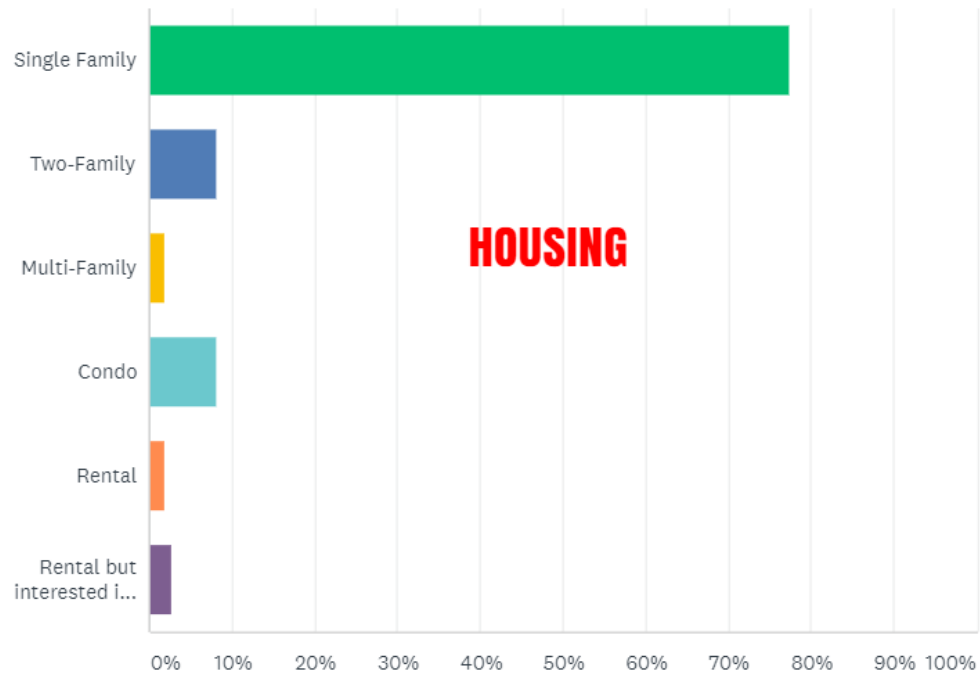
- **Senior Population Data Updated** (2017 data updated by city – city eliminates college dorm counts so Total city pop. differs from Fed. Census data by 6000+)
- Increasing growth of Newton's older adult population, which includes everyone age 60 or older, also has significant implications for what city government needs to do in order to have an All Age-Friendly Community. That senior age cohort today accounts for fully 27% of our total population, and is growing. In fact, about 40% of Newton households today include at least one of these older residents, a percentage that has increased steadily for several years. And about half of our seniors, the fast-growing 70+ age cohort, is already 14% of Newton's total population. Longevity is increasing everywhere, including in Newton. This is a change from the past, and calls for a corresponding change in our thinking.
- **PAST:** In the three years from 2002 to 2005, Newton's population age 70-75 DECREASED by 8.4%. Our population age 75 and older DECREASED by 22.2%.
- **PRESENT:** In the three years from 2014 to 2017, Newton's population age 70-75 INCREASED by 36%! Our population age 75 and older INCREASED by 9.5%, faster than our population as a whole.
- We are increasingly a city with a substantial and growing population of elderly people. The vast majority (88%, according to a 2014 survey) want and intend to remain in Newton. Our Newton community can make use of the knowledge they bring, plus the available time many of them have to volunteer and contribute to community life. We also

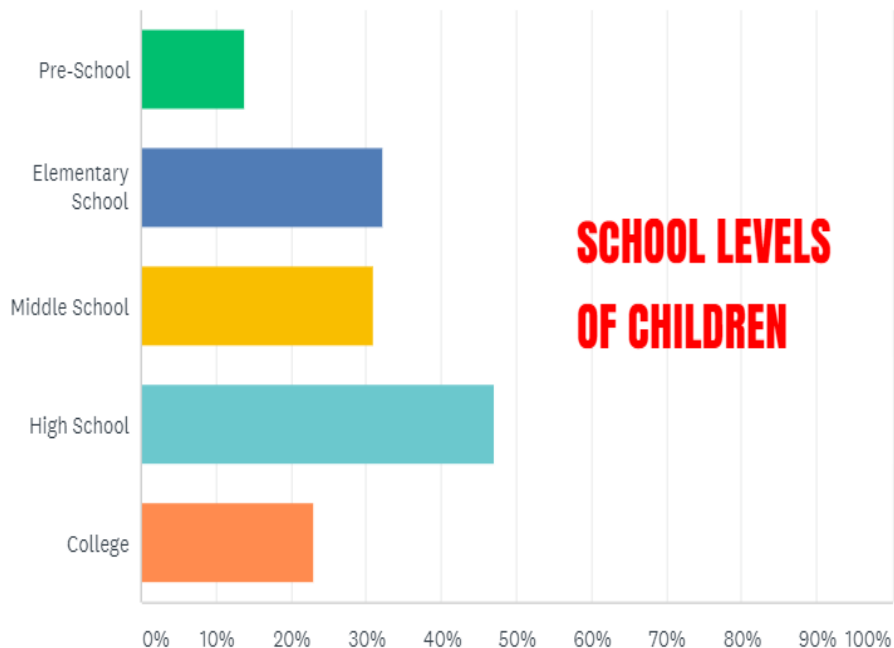
must accommodate our infrastructure, housing, transportation and operations to support our eldest neighbors in having an engaged, safe and enjoyable life.

- **People of color data**

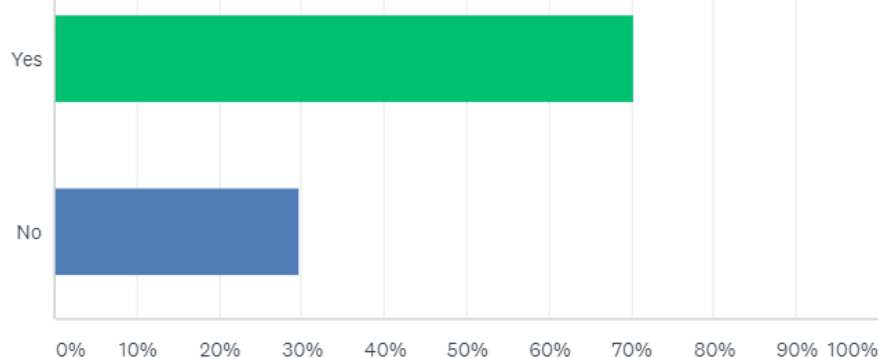
While we don't have statistical data which collectively represents the people of color in Newton a recent survey which included 111 respondents including African-Americans, Asians and Latinos breaks down as follows:







## DO YOU FEEL CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITY?



- **A deeper look at those in Newton struggling to make ends meet:**
  - **22% of Newton families earn less than the \$78k** necessary for a four-member family to make ends meet in our high-cost-of-living community. **And 52% earn more than \$150k annually.**
  - The cost of living in Newton is 11-19% more than in surrounding communities according to a study commissioned by the city (*Economic Growth for All*)
  - A Newton family with two adults (both working) and two children needs to earn \$77,949 in 2014 dollars to make ends meet
  - A single adult would need to earn at least \$32,044 to make ends meet
  - 21% of Newton families earn under \$75,000
  - Newton's 18 census tracts differ substantially in density, household income, racial diversity, and percent of owner occupied housing

**Greatest Newton Population  
Density 2010**

Highest HH Income \$204,000 in 3737-  
Newton Centre

Census Tract	Pop. /sq. mi.
3732- Nonantum	8,685
3746- W. Newton	7,386
3731- Newton Corner no.& so. of Pike	7,143

Lowest density 2,672 in 3740- Oak Hill Park

<b>Largest Percent of Non-white Residents 2010</b>	
Census Tract	Non-White Residents %
3741 Upper Falls	27.8%
3740 Oak Hill Park	22.5%
3732 Nonantum	20.1%

Highest % of owner-occupied housing 86.5% in 3737- Newton

<b>Smallest Percent of Owner Occupied Housing 2010</b>	
Census Tract	
3732- Nonantum	39.1%
3731- Newton Corner no.& so. of Pike	47%
3741- Upper Falls	54%

Highest % of owner-occupied housing 86.5% in 3737- Newton Centre

Lowest % of Non-white residents 11% in 3737- Newton Centre

*See Appendices for Census Tract Map and Comparative Tables. Data from Barry Bluestone, Tracy Corley, Demographic Trends and Housing in the City of Newton, May 2014.*

- Nonantum and Newton Corner are the two tracts with the largest percent of single person households (both at 35%) and the lowest median age of population (excluding the two tracts with college dormitories).
- Of tracts with at least 50% married couple households, the lowest median income areas are 2 West Newton tracts and one Newtonville (all north of the pike), along with one Auburndale and one Newton Highlands tract.
- Both Senior and Young-adult single member households are among those households that struggle the most to make ends meet in Newton.



## Priority Issues and Joint Recommendations

### ❖ Transportation and Mobility

The All Age-Friendly Newton Committee found transportation and mobility issues to be high on the list of challenges facing many across a number of age cohorts in the city. The following recommendations are intended to underscore the problems some residents face due to the absence of specific types of transportation and of safe walkways, not to be a comprehensive listing.

#### The top Priorities

Newton residents of all ages who do not drive or do not have access to a car have very limited ways to get around the city, especially travelling north to south or the reverse. Residents who live near Washington St. or near the Green Line (via bus or train respectively) have decent east west service along narrow corridors of the city. But most residents are not within a half-mile of those services and even those who are need to get to destinations in the city not in those corridors. Taxis and Transportation Network Companies (TNC) like Uber are too pricey for most to use as a single rider on a regular basis. Typical MBTA local bus fares are \$0.85 for seniors or students with ID cards and \$1.70 for riders 12 and older using a Charlie Card. Veterans Taxi charges the city \$13/ride within Newton for its voucher program - the best proxy for the cost of a typical intra-city taxi ride - and specialized services for students such as Sheprd charge even more per ride. **Developing an array of transportation services for seniors, school age kids and other folks who need affordable, shared ride options to traverse the city is critical to ensuring that Newton is and remains an all age-friendly community.**

Earlier this year, the City issued *Newton in Motion: A Transportation Strategy for Newton (February 2017)* a comprehensive vision for the city. The vision includes new intra-Newton services. Now specifics need to be designed, vetted, and implemented.

#### Four-year Recommendations

- Among the projects outlined in *Newton in Motion*, give priority to services and programs which serve populations with no current service or limited options (intra-Newton shuttle, affordable options for ride sharing, transport to after school care)
  - The senior population is growing rapidly – need for low entry, accessible transit service that is moderately priced and covers most of Newton, and is available most days is critical for seniors being able to maintain an independent life.
  - Affordable options for transporting students to after-school care and other activities.
  - Affordable options to help struggling families access daycare and early childhood education programs for children younger than kindergarten age
  - **One size does not fit all transportation needs.** Types of service that might be explored and pilots tested:
    - Fixed route shuttle service between key destinations
    - Partnerships with private and non-profit groups that already do regular shuttles in the area and may have capacity or the ability to expand at minimal cost (private companies, colleges, Healthcare organizations, etc).
    - Small niche programs modeled on Newton at Home's successful ride service.
    - Ride-sharing contracted with TNCs such as Uber.
- Give priority to programs which encourage healthy options such as walking or biking (wayfinding signage, sidewalk lighting, bicycle parking, sidewalk maintenance, bike lanes, etc). Such options tend to involve minimal cost while providing significant goodwill and positive reaction
- Promote use of public transit, ride sharing, walking and biking. However, the city needs to continue to actively advocate to improve the frequency of the commuter rail and MBTA schedule. Ideally provide better access to Needham St which will also help to alleviate congestion in that area. Finally investigate the possibility of partnering with MetroWest Regional Transit Authority to provide service in Newton from North to South.

- Investigate experience of suburban communities with promoting safe public transit travel for kids. Evaluate possible effectiveness of such a program. Urban kids more readily use public buses, subways, streetcars and trains than do their suburban peers. Can public education play a role in changing habits?
- Explore grant sources to fund design and piloting of programs to address transport needs for Newton's financially constrained families.

## One-year recommendations

**Transport for seniors - Background.** The actual number of seniors in Newton has steadily increased since 2010 (as forecasted). With many seniors no longer driving, the number one priority they seek is transportation to access medical care, to do food shopping and priority personal business, and to socialize. The City's Department of Senior Services provides 25,000 subsidized rides per year under its taxi voucher program. City funding for this program has been level for three years. **Until additional services are available to meet the needs of seniors, funding for the voucher program should increase as the senior population increases.**

Newton at Home has successfully established a transportation program based on volunteer drivers and modest fees to cover driver out-of-pocket expenses (tolls, parking) that delivers 2000 rides annually to its membership. This concrete success suggests that well designed and thoughtfully run programs using volunteer drivers can be an important component of a system of options to meet the needs of Newton's older residents.

- Increase city funding for taxi voucher program consistent with increase in senior population (this is a holding action, not a solution to senior needs)
- Explore options to broaden the range of places seniors can get transportation to given the current destination limits under the voucher program.

**Transport to after-school care.** Most Newton after-school care programs for elementary students have wait lists and no space at or near the school for program expansion. Community agencies and organizations not adjacent to schools have capacity to deliver more after school care, but lack access to affordable safe transport of kids from school to their program sites. Recently Family Access was forced to drop its after school care program which served 55 kids due to transportation costs in excess of \$100,000 annually. The Y and other program providers use kid-friendly transport services like **Sheprd** which charges \$17/person per trip within Newton which equals a prohibitive annual cost for families of modest means (\$3000/kid for 180 days just for one-way transportation).

- Affordable after school care and affordable transport to that care is a critical component of keeping Newton all Age Friendly for middle income and modest income families**

**Minimum safety check and standard for city sidewalks in village centers and high foot-traffic areas.** Newton sidewalks need to be more walker friendly. It's great that attention to sidewalks is part of plans for future revitalization of village centers, but seniors who want to stay active and parents who push strollers need help now, not in five to 10 years. We do not wait for street resurfacing to fill potholes and we should not put off fixing glaring tripping hazards on sidewalks until there is a major project underway. **Falls are a major hazard for seniors. Sidewalks in disrepair are a significant cause.**

- Establish a regular review of high-traffic sidewalk areas to determine unsafe conditions. Create a prioritized list of hazards, set a standard response time and track repairs.
- After significant storms, improve winter mobility and access by monitoring and enforcing snow clearance in high foot-traffic areas. Track clearance on city website so pedestrians have up-to-date information on foot access.

**Winter parking issues – overnight bans & possible bans on some two-sided parking narrow streets** - Densely settled areas of the city with primarily two-family housing units and limited or no off-street parking find the winter parking ban challenging. Other areas with mostly single houses and some institutions such as educational facilities and houses of worship like the bans and request consideration of restricting parking to one side of some side streets when snow is not cleared curb to curb.

- a. Set-up a working group of key stakeholders (including safety officials and city councilors and residents) to explore possibilities of zoned areas where less restricted overnight parking is allowed in winter except for emergency snow days. And consider standards & process for positive action banning parking on two sides of narrow streets in certain post storm winter conditions

## ❖ **Housing**

As we interviewed agency and department heads and read through volumes of demographic data and analyses of changes in Newton in recent decades, the lack of right-sized, affordable housing for several sectors of the population rose to the top of the list of critical needs again and again. We leave it to the Housing Committee of the Transition Team to delve into detailed recommendations. But here we draw attention to the priority needs.

- a. Seniors - Right-sized, senior-friendly, elevator equipped rental units near transportation and an easy walk to numerous conveniences such as drug stores, banks, etc.
- b. Young families - need for affordable two and three-bedroom units (rental, condo or small multi-family units) near transportation, schools, and village centers to minimize dependency on cars and provide easy access to childcare and other kid-oriented services.

## ❖ **Education**

Early Childhood Education and After School Care

**Background:** Families come to Newton because of its rich educational system that provides opportunities to all families. Children reaching certain benchmarks during childhood will likely attain self-sufficiency over their lifetime. Resources need to be allocated to help all children reach these benchmarks.

Access, affordability and capacity are the biggest challenges in Newton Early Education and Care (EEC). There is a disparity of enrollment among low/moderate income families and English language learner families. (See 2016 Northeastern University report and 2017 Boston College report). The 2017 Boston College report has key recommendations for both the short and long-term horizon.

### **Key Facts Underlying Concerns**

- 15% of eligible children are not enrolled in any EEC.
- Newton has 30 EEC programs but only 44% provide full-day, year-round care.
- EEC could cost 20% or more of income for families just making ends meet or struggling to make ends meet. [\$15,875 (median cost)/\$77,949(earned income to make ends meet)]

The Educational Cabinet, under Mayor Warren's *Economic Growth for All initiative*, was formed to address ways to promote children reaching these self-sufficiency benchmarks at each stage. This cabinet focused on preschool and after-school time. Two highlighted programs include Summer Reading Challenge and Summer High School Internship program. A new initiative would focus on middle school out of school time connecting already available programs with children who would benefit.

### **Evaluate Options Detailed in Existing Policy Recommendations**

#### **One-year Recommendations**

Improve Information and streamline enrollment to support EEC access.

- Create electronic hub for EEC - Successful implementation in Brookline.
- Reinstate annual Newton EEC Fair - Couple fair with activity like Tumblebus.

Evaluate and re-invest in effective opportunities to help children reach key benchmarks

- Summer Reading Challenge

- High School Internship Program (evaluate – adjust accordingly)

## Four-year Recommendations

- Develop funding streams to improve affordability for low/moderate-income families.
- Increase number of full day and full year EEC options.
- Initiate after hours school focus for middle & high school students

### After-school program options for middle school and high school students:

Bring together key players from parent groups, Newton Public Schools and area agencies such as the West Suburban YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, Newton Community Education to explore options for quality programs that could be provided in schools and other venues both on the North and South side of Newton. Be mindful of potential hurdle re high transportation costs until new systems are developed.

*[Note Re EEC: Input to any policy initiatives from the associations that focus on EEC is important. Mayor-Elect Fuller has received an invitation to attend the Newton Early Childhood Association Directors' Meeting (34 members) which meets 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month at Second Church Nursery School at 3:30 PM. Contact Susan Benes at [secondchurchnurseryschool@comcast.net](mailto:secondchurchnurseryschool@comcast.net) to schedule attendance.]*

❖ <b>Communication</b>
------------------------

Department and agency heads interviewed expressed frustration with the difficulty of getting information about their services and programs to their target audiences – including availability of supports. Today's seniors often prefer paper notices over electronic information. Families with limited resources or language issues can also be difficult to reach.

The city has a wealth of data, reports and resources on its website, but far too much of it is frustratingly hard to access

- Establish a working group of representatives from departments and non-profit agencies who struggle with getting info to vulnerable target groups to see how they might pool resources (while protecting privacy rights) to better communicate with all residents in need of services or information about resources.
- For the more tech savvy - Create Newton's own application (app) platform where information can be shared about services offered, advertisement for local businesses, and events happening in the neighborhood. This would be in addition to brochures published by and advertisements generated by City Hall to inform citizens about services across Newton.
- **The city desperately needs an outside consultant to review how the city archives information on its website.** The very recent changes in the city's website do not seem to be an improvement, but appear to add more chaos and frustration.

❖ <b>Process for strategic Initiatives–</b>
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Based on a broad-brush review of the many strategic initiatives undertaken by Mayor Warren, we propose the following outline for a process.

- ID leadership responsibility for initiative with clear lines of responsibility to Mayor
- Early data collection to clarify and/or quantify need and challenges
- Key stakeholders involved early on in a meaningful way -- too often inclusion is window dressing
- Goal setting and tracking of progress
- Follow up and evaluation of outcomes at appropriate points
- Final report and recommendations for adjustments. Include lessons learned for future initiatives.

Lessons based on reviewing some strategic initiatives from the last eight years

- Initiatives have produced many very fine reports and collections of data. Unfortunately, reports are too often hard to find on the city's website – a pro-active plan re how to archive relevant docs

during an initiative and where to store afterwards is critical. Consistency on archiving is critical. And if there is a logic to how things are archived, don't keep it a secret.

- Many recent initiatives included groups of key stake-holders. Very positive feedback about some; great frustration with others. Feedback from participants; willing to serve, willing to work, but don't waste our time or use us only for window-dressing. If a plan to use stakeholders runs into trouble, fix it or disband it.
- It's hard to tell from the city's website and various reports just where on a project timeline an initiative currently sits: What's been done; what's not done yet; what has been abandoned. A public update timeline ought to be available online for any significant strategic initiative.
- Citizens might find it refreshing to hear what has been dropped or abandoned or didn't work out. Clarity and admission that something proved untenable actually builds trust.
- Might the Transition Team play a role in tracking Team Fuller initiatives?

#### ❖ Additional Recommendations from Holly Gunner

### THE TIMES, THEY ARE A-CHANGIN' – AND NEWTON NEEDS TO KEEP PACE

By Holly Gunner

For the first dozen years of this century, Newton's eldest older adults left our city, due either to moving or dying. Although the rate of their decrease slowed more and more with each successive year, we developed a mind-set that Newton was not for older people. I can recall informal conversations with some Aldermen who told me they, themselves, expected to leave when they got older, some for financial reasons. (They are still here in their late '60's, actually.)

But sometime around 2013 or 2014, the number of Newtonians age 75 and older began to increase. From 2012 to 2014, the increase was 4.7%, in a time period when the city's total population decreased by 2.3%. And in the next three years, 2014 to 2017, that eldest age cohort increased faster, by 9.5%, and faster than the population as a whole. Right behind them was the 70-75 year-old age cohort, which grew a whopping 36%.<sup>1</sup>

Newton is a great community. And people are staying here. In 2014, Newton's Senior Department and Council on Aging commissioned a survey of Newton's residents age 50 and older. The survey found:

***"The majority (63%) of respondents age 50 and older reported living in Newton for 25 years or longer, and nearly half (49%) have lived in their current residences for that long. Thus, much of the growth in the older population has occurred as a result of Newton residents aging in place. By and large, aging in place is a common goal in Newton, as indicated by the 88% of Senior respondents who stated it is important to them to stay in Newton as long as possible, and 78% of Seniors who said it is important to remain in their current village as long as possible. The vast majority of survey respondents (72%) reported that they lived in single-family homes. In Newton, many live alone in these single-family homes."***<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Demographic raw data in this section come from Newton's own City Census, courtesy of Doug Greenfield. Percent calculations were done by Holly Gunner. For recent and current data See Appendix, Newton Census Data by Age Cohort 2014 and 2017.

<sup>2</sup> The survey had a high response rate and was conducted by the Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging, Gerontology Institute, McCormack Graduate School of Policy & Global Studies, U Mass. Boston. (<http://www.newtonma.gov/civicax/filebank/documents/74184>) and in this report's Appendix.

Newtonians are also living longer, along with people in Massachusetts as a whole, the US as a whole and much of the rest of the world. The fastest-growing age cohort in Massachusetts is 85 and older. The second fastest-growing is 100 and older.

### **LONGEVITY OF NEWTON'S OLDEST ADULTS AND BABY BOOMERS AGING IN PLACE**

#### **Population changes**

<b>YESTERDAY: 2002-2012</b>	<b>TODAY: 2014-2017</b>
<p>Total Population - 8.3%</p> <p>Under age 50 -16.3%</p> <p>Age 50-59 + 4.0%</p> <p>Age 60-69 + 69.4%</p> <div> <p>Age 70-75 +22.3%</p> <p>Age 75+ - 34.3%</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our eldest residents departed.</li> <li>• Our post-war baby boomers were in or near their 60's.</li> </ul>	<p>Total Population + 7.1%</p> <p>Under age 50 + 3.9%</p> <p>Age 50-59 + 11.4%</p> <p>Age 60-69 + 7.8%</p> <div> <p>Age 70-75 +36.0%</p> <p>Age 75+ + 9.5%</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our eldest residents' are increasing 2½ times faster than those under 50.</li> <li>• Baby boomers are entering their 70's</li> <li>• Our septuagenarians <u>aren't</u> <u>going away</u>.</li> </ul>

Thus, we're experiencing a major change in the composition of our population. Newton's 2017 census revealed that our 70+ age cohort is already 14% of our total population, and our 60+ cohort ("Seniors") is 27% of the total, included in about 40% of all households. These numbers show higher percentages today than earlier predictions expected, particularly those based on US Census data, which includes about 7,000 transient higher education students.

So, on the one hand, we have a mindset that Newton's not for older people; or, that they're going away. On the other hand, we have a fast-growing population of older adults, notably the oldest, whose lives increasingly call for community support to help them lead healthy, safe, enjoyable and socially-connected lives. These people also are a larger and larger resource of worldly-wise people who may have time to volunteer and provide an array of resources to Newton's children, social service agencies, city government and other parts of our community. For example, Newton at Home has a program through which its members wishing to clear their homes of furniture and household goods accumulated over decades can donate those goods to Second Step, thus helping the women whose lives are helped by that organization. Or, the Boys' and Girls' Club calls on Senior volunteers to read to children or lead arts and crafts or other classes after school.

**We need to internalize the new reality that we have a growing and long-lived older adult population living all over our city, and THEY'RE NOT GOING AWAY!**

#### **A QUICK PRIMER ON WHAT OLDER ADULTS NEED THAT OFTEN ONLY A GOVERNMENT CAN PROVIDE OR HELP TO PROVIDE (IN CONCERT WITH PRIVATE ENTITIES)**

Here are some facts about the physical and social characteristics of older adults:

- Their life expectancy exceeds their driving life expectancy. Researchers have estimated that people age 70-74 have about an 11-year driving life expectancy, but a longer life expectancy. Many people, in fact, stop or modify their driving around age 80-82 (e.g., after dark, bad weather). (See Appendix, American *J. Public Health* article.) But they still need to get around.
- As people age, they experience physical changes that include walking more slowly, needing to rest from time to time while walking a distance, decreased balance, less visual and hearing acuity. (See June 2013 minutes of the Newton TAG in the Appendix)
- Older adults who experience social isolation (because, for example, they live alone and don't drive at all, or after dark) actually die sooner than those who are engaged in social and community life. Social isolation can be a killer.
- Falling (perhaps because of broken sidewalks, tripping while walking on poorly lit streets, rushing to cross a street before the light changes faster than they can walk to get to the other side) is extremely dangerous for older bodies. According to the CDC, 30% of women 65 and older fall. Of those who fall, 25% end up dying from injuries resulting from the fall. A larger percentage sustains injuries that prevent them from ever resuming their lives as before, including often being unable to return to the same living situation. The percentage of men who fall is slightly lower than that for women. But the percentages increase with age for both groups. And the dangerous consequences are the same for both. Falling can be a killer.
- Housing that's best suited to elderly people is on a single floor (no stairs); with interior fixtures that include easy-to-turn door knobs and faucets, pull-out shelves; and that's near transportation, a grocery store, a pharmacy, a bank, a post office and some amenities such as restaurants; and, if in a multi-storey building, has an elevator. (See Appendix: June 2013 minutes of the Newton TAG; plus the Newton Council on Aging/Senior Services Department's COA Housing Criteria FINAL, "Housing Criteria for an Age-Friendly Newton for Everyone")

These facts about older adults are common sense, every-day items that are not rocket science to comprehend or even to figure out. **So, why has Newton done so little to date to relate to these facts, to accommodate them, to plan for them?** How come, for example, Newton only has 1,986 housing units in elevator buildings with 8 or more units, given an estimated demand of 3,000 to 4,000 units? (See Appendix: Newton Council on Aging's "Newton Housing Availability Data for Seniors 2015") How come Newton—a city that's very spread out-- has almost no public transportation that goes north-south at all, that runs in the evening and on week-ends, or that is accessible without a car from most areas of the city? How come all we offer our Seniors is a subsidized taxi program that's severely restricted as to time of day, days of the week and destinations permitted. (This is far better than nothing, and currently helps about 1,000 people who take about 25,000 subsidized rides each year.)

Here are some possible reasons:

1. We haven't had so many older people, nor so many living so long. So, we didn't need to think about them. We developed a habit of not focusing on the needs and capabilities of older people, focusing instead on other people and other priorities.
2. We're ageist. We'd rather not have to think about older people, whom we consider passé or a nuisance.
3. We've lacked leadership—sustained, effective leadership—that pulls together and mobilizes people and agencies throughout the city that are interested in and focused on older adults.
4. We don't want to allocate resources to older people because we think they're going away.

Understanding reasons surely helps to design solutions for moving forward. My best guess is that all the reasons listed above play some role.

*And this is where a Mayor and her administration can make a big, constructive and much-needed difference. By communicating to city staff, to public bodies and to relevant private organizations that our elders are a priority and a valued resource, our Mayor can foster and legitimize efforts to incorporate seniors' needs into our everyday work and special projects.*

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND SOME TACTICS FOR MANAGING THE CHANGE**

Following three basic cornerstones or principles would be helpful in approaching Newton's efforts to support and utilize our growing older adult population.

**Consciousness:** Creating a culture that is mindful of the needs of older adults--just as we Newtonians have a culture of attending to the needs of lower-income people, children, the environment--can help our city staff and public bodies incorporate these needs in ongoing work. This is not an expensive, new budget item. Sometimes it won't involve any expenditures and sometimes it will involve how we make expenditures we were going to make anyway (e.g., choosing sidewalks to repair, how we "beautify" village centers by including benches and good lighting).

- **Assign a "senior" champion in each working group/commission/committee and city department** who will voice these needs in situ when work is going on. **Raise consciousness** among all city staff/departments, infuse a mind-set, and foster ownership about the needs and potential contributions of older adults. From time to time, ask each champion what's happening in his/her area. Among the departments this might include are: Planning and Development, Public Works (including Transportation), Cultural Affairs, Purchasing, Human Resources, Public Buildings, Information Technology, Inspectional Services, Fire, Police, Public Library, Public Schools (Community Education), Assessing.
- **Arrange a visit to the MIT Age Lab** for key staff to learn, and perhaps experience, how older bodies navigate the world around us. Include the Mayor and invite interested City Councilors.
- **Integrate into all municipal planning**, budgeting and operations the relevant facts about older adult needs, as well as the resources they can bring to the community. Insist that this be done at the outset of an endeavor, and ask about it during progress reports and briefings.

**Collaboration:** In our interviews with various government- and private-sector organizations, it became clear that creating a Mayoral Elder Affairs Cabinet of public and private sector organization leaders would be beneficial in getting action on specific needs/opportunities (e.g., involving more older adults in productive volunteer activities that could benefit civic and business organizations; advocating for and perhaps helping to provide age-friendly housing and transportation). Newton has many knowledgeable and experienced people. It would be good to create a formal structure that would efficiently foster collaboration among city departments and private organizations that serve Newton's older adults and/or that can benefit from what older adults can offer the community.

- **Establish an "Elder Affairs Community Cabinet"** to advise the Mayor on how to address city-wide issues of concern to older adults. Include representatives of multiple public and private agencies/entities in (or serving) Newton, both not-for-profit and for-profit.

**Communication/Marketing:** In our interviews, we heard time and time again that information about existing programs doesn't reach enough of its intended audience. This probably pertains to many public and private sector programs.

- **Bring together various agencies** that have programs for older adults and/or can use their talents to think together about how they might collaborate to improve the reach of program information.



- For any new initiative, **conduct feedback/listening sessions around the city** to solicit community input. Call on the Elder Affairs Cabinet and other city institutions to publicize the sessions and also contribute their knowledge.

### **PRIORITIES FOR ACTION**

Four priorities are recommended, in order of importance to the largest number of Newton's older adults. These are multi-year endeavors, and fit with the priorities recommended by the All- Age Friendly team.

- Transportation: Develop intra-city transportation that includes evenings and week-ends and routes that cover many destinations. Explore regional transportation collaborations. This is the number one priority, not only for older adults, but for people of all ages engaged in a wide range of activities in Newton.
- Housing: Cause development/a start on development of at least 500 housing units with single-floor living in elevator buildings.
- Marketing/Communications: Increase citizens' knowledge of current resources for older adults in Newton, as well as future resources as they're developed.
- Improve facilities for Newton's Senior Center. Consider bringing (some) services to where the people are.

### **TIMETABLE**

In the first six months:

- Take at least two dozen staff members on a field trip with the Mayor to the MIT Age Lab. Invite interested City Councilors. Create settings to talk about it when people return.
- Appoint or cause to be appointed an Older Adult Champion in most City departments and key city commissions/committees/councils.
- Put an occupational therapist/gerontologist/geriatric medical person on every group (departments, task forces, commissions, committees, etc.) that addresses transportation or mobility or public safety in the city.
- Have the Mayor meet with Brookline's Frank Caro to learn how he 1) involved all Brookline Town departments in doing senior-supportive activities and 2) has involved Brookline Seniors in helping the Town by, for example, inspecting merchants' compliance with the snow shoveling ordinance to help the Police Department enforce it, or documenting the number of seconds available for crossing Route 9 with a walk signal.
- Begin to plan for intra-city and regional transportation that spans all days of the week and most hours of the day and evening.
- Make sure the Planning Department and others formulating plans include at least 20% older adult champions (plural!) in the visioning/planning processes, including the Northland Vision Process. I have been on too many committees (including the All-Age Friendly Transition Team) where I am the only person with the designated role of Senior Champion. One is not enough to foster attention to Older Adult concerns. It limits thinking and outreach.
- Form the Elder Affairs Community Cabinet (first 9 months)

By the end of Year 1:

- Produce a blueprint/plan for an intra-city transit system and be ready to execute a pilot in Year 2. Plan the pilot to last sufficiently long for potential riders to learn about it and alter their car-centric habits. Include a professionally-created marketing plan for rolling out the pilot.

- Explore options for improving Senior Center facilities.
- Identify at least two sites where elevator buildings with single-floor living near transportation could be located.

#### **FOR THE RADAR SCREEN (IN GENERAL)**

- For many City endeavors, investigate, consider and incorporate planning how future technology in 5-to-10 years might impact plans we're making today, as well as how we're doing things today

#### **IN CLOSING**

"The medium is the message" is the reason for including a separate section of our report that deals just with Seniors. For too long, our older adult population has been an afterthought in any given municipal activity or project. And the needs of these people, particularly our oldest people, have not been considered in detail when municipal endeavors are planned or under way. For demographic and ethical reasons, we need now to ensure these needs are a focus that's included in our municipal work, particularly our planning, transportation, land use and public works undertakings. It's not rocket science. It just takes focus, leadership and the will to do it. Mayoral leadership and attention can stimulate others to focus and apply their good minds to support an Older-Age Friendly Newton, a key part of an All-Age Friendly Newton. Until we are Older-Age Friendly, we will never be All-Age Friendly.

#### **❖ Additional Recommendations from Anne Larner**

#### **Valuing and Preserving a Truly Diverse Community**

Since the late 1800s when Newton's population more than doubled in a 30-year period -- fueled by an influx of immigrants primarily from Ireland and Canada and after 1900 from Italy -- the city has wrestled with being a welcoming and diverse community that values all of its residents while seen from outside as primarily a prosperous and somewhat homogeneous town. The snapshot at the beginning of our report from the 2010 federal census shows a community more divided than ever economically with over 50% of families earning more than \$150,000 annually, more than 25% earning less than \$75,000, and the middle-income segment disappearing. **Absent planning and thoughtful action to support struggling younger families and our aging population, Newton is at risk of evolving into an enclave reserved for just the wealthy.**

**The question: How to preserve what economic diversity that remains today and rekindle our appreciation for what each of us contributes to what makes Newton special?**

#### **KEY AREAS OF FOCUS**

- Leadership: getting city officials and community members to take the steps necessary to preserve and maintain a truly diverse community
- Tackling the housing crisis
- Developing a more robust transportation network to support an economically diverse community
- Supporting affordable early learning and child care
- Supporting and expanding the programs and opportunities that allow all Newton residents to share in a vibrant community life. And build on the long Newton history of providing paths (for those who struggle economically) to opportunities for growth and development.

1. **LEADERSHIP: The mayor has the single most powerful voice in the community. She sets the tone and expectations regarding what the city values and what the priorities are.**

**Walk the walk and talk the talk**

Words matter: Set the standard for both small interactions and big discussions:

- Return phone calls, acknowledge messages, provide citizens access
- Do not ignore or enable talk among staff or in public settings that demeans some neighborhoods and glorifies others, sees Ivy League resumes as automatically superior to state university resumes, or the advice from a Goldman Sachs executive as necessarily wiser than that of a shop keeper.

Model respect and expect your staff to do the same:  
Own mistakes.

Get to know new neighborhood folks - (without entourage) visit various neighborhoods -- buy coffee, shop in a store, walk in a park, visit a soccer or Little League field on game days. Talk to the kids. Talk to the dogs and their owners! Experience a new neighborhood as often as practical.

Always have a few confidants close to you who you respect who will not hesitate to tell you (quietly) that you wrong or way off base (including at least one staff member).

**Spend your political capital on preserving Newton's rich diversity. Be bold. Take risks.**

- **Invest time in building a diverse political coalition from across the city**  
**Be passionate. Ask for help. Voice urgency.**

2. **Commit to tackling Housing**

The need has been documented. The existing stock is well documented. Many options have been explored. Zoning reform and a public process that gets general buy-in is critical for making headway.

- **Take the lead**
- **Invest money in outside expertise with a proven track record guiding community engagement on tricky issues.**

3. **Commit to developing an array of affordable transportation services (priced comparably to MBTA local service prices) to get folks of all ages to and from destinations within the city.** This is a win-win for the whole city while being a special win for people and families on limited budgets.

4. **Commit to early education, child care, and after school care for families with working parents**  
In addition to housing, the biggest issue for working families is early education and child care. Unlike the issues of housing and transportation, EEC and child care do not initially require a very public, community-wide discussion with all the accompanying tensions and use of time and energy. Rather it requires a strong professional partnership between public and non-profit groups to work cooperatively to create an adequate number of subsidized slots so that all Newton children have the option of a strong early learning experience and appropriate child care services and after school care. It appears that a solid foundation of academic study and of cooperative relationships among public and private EEC providers has been developing. Now (in the mayor's first year) it's time to review and act on recommendations to expand subsidized opportunities for children whose family cannot afford the full cost of EEC or day care. This is a critical investment of public and private funds in our future.

Before the end of Mayor Fuller's first term, public conversation on universal pre-school should begin (likely sliding scale fees.) Although several needs assessments have been done and professionals have explored options, the political implications of universal pre-school given the economic demographics of the city are challenging. The public conversation will likely be lengthy.

### **Build on the city's current strengths**

The public sector: Re-enforce, support, challenge city departments (including the schools) that serve the full economic spectrum of Newton residents to support the city's diversity – set incentives to keep tax dollar supported programming available to all – always a mix that includes free events and services in addition to fee-based opportunities (including school extra-curricular offerings and sports) and opportunities for children and adults with disabilities. **The Newton Public Schools is and has been for years the anchor service, the key provider of service to all school aged residents.** (The teachers do a great job, but like all institutions periodically the leadership needs to be reminded about serving all of the children – especially those whose parents don't feel they have a powerful voice.) **But there are other important players. The Newton Free Library, Parks and Recreation, Newton Senior Services, Historic Newton – are all terrific meeting places for a rich cross-section of the city.** City programs have been and can continue to be one of the glues that binds our mix of residents into real community if key managers are sensitive to fee-fatigue from struggling families. The opportunities sponsored by the city to play, to learn, to meet, to mix should not be taken for granted or undervalued. There are many wonderful examples how programs from these city departments and others not only bring adults or children from different backgrounds together, but also how program content can reinforce for participants the richness of the tapestry of people that make up Newton. Below is one new example.

Historic Newton just received funding to run a new program on immigration aimed at grades 4 through 12. This program can travel to a school or be presented to classes visiting one of the museums. By using artifacts and primary sources about actual families from different ethnicities and socio-economic status who immigrated from four different countries (Ireland, Italy, Russia, and China) in the late 1800s, students will grapple with key decisions families had to make and talk through the impact on the lives of family members. They will think through and role play struggles, opportunities, and special contributions made by different cultures.

The non-profit sector: Support, value and partner with the many non-profits that act as bridges for city residents to access Newton life, learning, and recreation. Many have long histories dating to the early 1900s – The Y (1877), Family Access (1907), The Boys and Girls Club (1899) have long supported, enriched, and mentored many residents looking for new skills, new friends, and even some fun. The Y provides activities and programs for 11,000 Newton residences annually; the Boys and Girls Club services 2,100 Newton kids aged 5 to 16 each year; and Family Access provides early learning and child care services to about 450 per year plus special instruction in the public elementary schools to empower kids to deal with potential abuse. **They and other non-profits are critical partners in sustaining Newton's diversity** through offering much needed services, offering reduced fees to the degree they are able and outreaching to vulnerable populations. The Newton we know would not exist without them.

Continue creating partnerships: Break down remaining silos and “turf-think” within city government (including the school department). Create incentives for city managers to increase networking, coordinating and partnering with appropriate outside agencies and groups. More can be done with less when groups cooperate and coordinate rather than compete. Reward effective partnerships.

## ❖ Additional Recommendations from Angela Pitter Wright

### **Inclusiveness – Connecting and Engaging People of Color in Newton**

The survey question on connectedness revealed that 70% felt connected to the community while 30% did not feel connected. However, most of respondents lived in Newton at least 10 years, with 26% living here over 20 years. Moreover, the respondents represented every village in Newton except for Chestnut Hill which can result in further isolation because the city is very large and the minority population is only 20%. Many of the comments were related to lack of visible people of color working in City Hall and the schools as well as elected officials.

#### **1-2 year Recommendations:**

- Establish a People of Color Advisory Board: This group could advise on a myriad of topics including but not limited to:
  - Working with the city to establish metrics for hiring people of color and monitoring the results; Likewise establish metrics to ensure that the membership of our city committees, boards and commissions reflects the diversity of the city
  - Providing access to their networks when job opportunities become available as well as openings on various city committees, boards and commissions; Having people of color participate on these committees brings another perspective to the table as well as provides a stepping stone to more involved opportunities such as running for office.
  - Host meet the Mayor events throughout the city, as well as affinity events to increase connectedness amongst the citizens of color – ie establish a “Meet-Up”
- Expand the “Newton Community Pride” program to include events which target other ethnic groups. For example, a Caribbean night could be added to the International Festivals. Also, many of the events and activities should include vendors of color, specifically the music/bands as well as vendors at Harvest Fair.
- Establish a hotline to receive calls from anyone who feels that they been discriminated against by a city employee, city official or from any members of the city committees, boards or commissions.
- Data Collection:
  - Continue to survey People of Color to better understand their specific concerns and to collect feedback on areas of improvement.
  - Establish a database/system to collect and track data from both surveys and hotline.
  - **Long Term:** Establish a database to collect demographic information from **all** citizens in Newton which includes occupation, expertise or any special skills. This database will assist the city when locating internal resources for job opportunities as well as opening on the cities various committees, boards and commissions.

## **Appendices**

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### **Table 1 Completed Interviews**

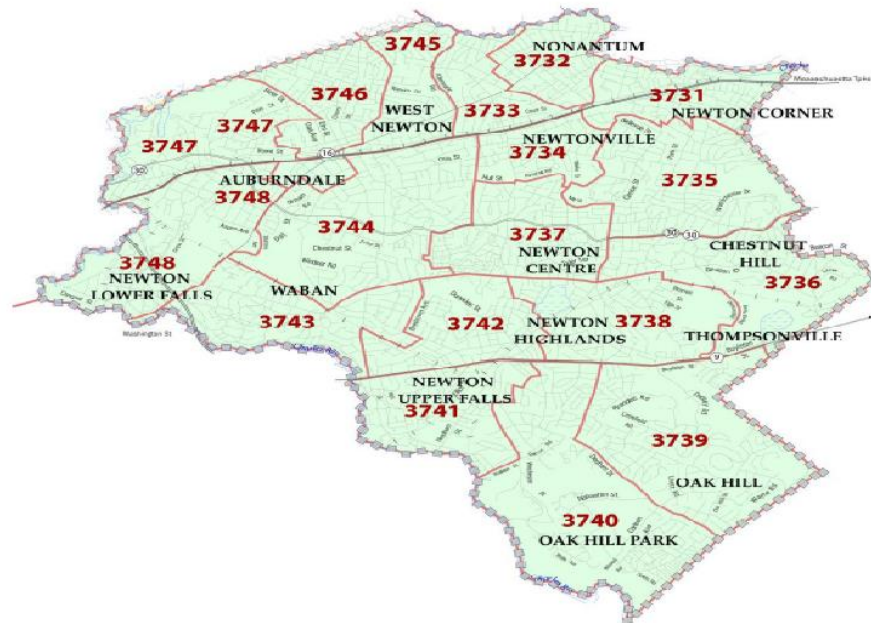
Interviews			
John M Barry Boys & Girls Club <a href="http://www.newtonbgc.com">www.newtonbgc.com</a>	David Sellars	Holly, Kalpana, Anne, Jen	ages 5 to 16
West suburban YMCA <a href="http://www.wsymca.org">www.wsymca.org</a>	Jack Fucci Trevor Williams	Holly, Kalpana, Anne	Age 3 mos. To 80+
Family Access <a href="http://www.familyaccess.org">www.familyaccess.org</a>	Jon Firger	Kalpana, Anne, Jen	Ages birth to 6
Newton at Home <a href="http://www.newtonathome.org">www.newtonathome.org</a>	Maureen Grannan	Holly, Kalpana, Anne	Ages 60+

Newton Dept. of Senior Services <a href="http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/seniors">www.newtonma.gov/gov/seniors</a>	Jayne Colino	Holly, Kalpana, Anne	Ages 60+
Department of Health & Human Services <a href="http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/health_n_human_services/">www.newtonma.gov/gov/health_n_human_services/</a>	Deborah Youngblood	Holly, Kalpana, Anne, Jen	
Second Church Nursery School <a href="http://2ndchurchnurseryschool.org">http://2ndchurchnurseryschool.org</a>	Susan Benes	Jen	Pre-School
Community Partnerships for Children & Families <a href="https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/1166">https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/1166</a>	Beverly Mobilia	Anne	Children
Historic Newton <a href="http://www.historicnewton.org">www.historicnewton.org</a>	Lisa Dady	Anne	Ages 3 to 80+

**Figure 1. Census Information by Tract**

*A Closer Look at the City of Newton by Census Tract*

Like most municipalities, Newton is home to diverse residents and communities. To examine this diversity, we turn to data for the 18 census tracts within the city.<sup>2</sup>



*Source: U.S. Census Bureau's MAF/TIGER database (TAB10ST25) and City of Newton Map Library*

**Tables 2 & 3. Demographic Characteristics of Newton's Census Tracts pg. 31 of Bluestone Demographic and Housing.**



Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Newton's Census Tracts

	Age	Diversity	Married Couple Families	Single Person Households	Income
373100					
373200			LEAST	MOST	LOWEST
373300					
373400					
373500					
373600	YOUNGEST				
373700			MOST	LEAST	HIGHEST
373800					
373900					
374000					
374100		MOST			
374200					
374300	OLDEST	LEAST			
374400					
374500					
374600					
374700					
374800					

Source: Compiled from USA.com Census Tract data for the City of Newton

Table 3: Housing Characteristics of Newton's Census Tracts

	Median House Value	Owner Occupied Housing	Apartment Buildings	New Housing Stock
373100				
373200	LEAST \$	LEAST		
373300				
373400				
373500				
373600	MOST \$			
373700		MOST	NONE	
373800				
373900			MOST	
374000				
374100				MOST
374200				
374300				NONE
374400	MOST \$			
374500				
374600				
374700				
374800				

Source: Compiled from USA.com Census Tract data for the City of Newton

### Holly Gunner Footnotes: Resources Concerning Older Adults. Located in Resources of All Age Friendly Newton.

Newton Census Data. *Newton Demographic by Age*. November 2017.

Mobility Needs of Older Adults, TAG Meeting Notes June 2013.

Newton Senior Survey Sept. 2014, Transportation Related Excerpts.  
Total Life Expectancy vs. Driving Life Expectancy of Older Drivers  
Poor Availability of Housing for 60+ in Newton.  
Senior Needs for Housing Criteria 10-15year \_2010-2015.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **General Comments: Communication / Messaging - Develop City Wide Communications Plan**

A critical issue, which affects all ages and everything is communication.

Whether it's the issue of getting information on existing programs and services to people, informing residents of all ages about new opportunities, keeping people up-to-date on all sorts of things, soliciting input/feedback or finding ways of keeping large numbers involved and engaged overtime (surveys, interactive on-line events, etc), communication and a communication plan is very important.

In addition - given the absence in Newton of what most people would call a "paper of record," it's important to get a handle on how Newton residents currently get their news about what's happening in the city so a new administration can maximize its ability to communicate to city residents on a whole range of things.

Also, have crisis communications team in place if and when needed when something tragic or sad happens in the city.

## **What should the Fuller Administration accomplish in year 1?**

### **Inclusion, Respect & Welcoming City Initiatives**

- Hold series of round tables:
  - Ask each group 'what could make Newton a more friendly, inclusive, respectful city'. Actively listen to the concerns and then follow up with staff, and meet with groups to report back.
  - Meet with Gay Straight Alliance groups at NN and NS with an open agenda to talk about what life is like in Newton for LGBTQ young people. Invite students to follow up with staff.
  - Meet with the group AWARE at NSHS – this group meets to think about ways that we can all be more mindful about emotional wellness and decrease the stigma around mental illness. The number of students impacted by stress, mental health and managing the pressures of living in Newton is a big factor. An accomplishment: help us build a community that values joy and health as much as it values academic accolades and college admissions.
  - Reach out to the folks who attended the Council meeting and protested making Newton a welcoming city. Have a Round Table discussion to listen to concerns. Assign their concerns to staff to follow up on.

- Meet with seniors at Senior Center and through Newton At Home. Listen to their concerns/ideas and assign follow up to City Hall staff.
- Meet with parishioners at Myrtle Baptist and Chinese churches (and others) to hear what they suggest for making Newton a friendlier city for all ages. Assign staff to follow up.
- More symbolic gestures:
  - At Mayor's Breakfast, invite students from the high schools to say 'welcome' in all the different languages (37 at NN alone!) Perhaps have a table or two (sponsored by someone/business) for families of immigrants – drawn by lottery?
  - Find ways to acknowledge the different holidays celebrated by different groups in the city – send out "Mayor's Message" via social media wishing them a good holiday (in their languages!)
  - Reach out to the more marginalized groups in Newton (think about the folks who turned out to spout such venom when the Council was considering making Newton a Welcoming City), gays/lesbians, people of color, etc.

### **Something Not on the Radar but Should Be**

- Social media Communications Strategy

### **Something for Another Committee**

- Explore **co-housing** to combat loneliness in the young and seniors

**Contributor:** *Marian Knapp*

## **All-Age Friendly Transition**

### **Overview**

The NCOA & NDSS work for the benefit of the entire City & provide the leadership to mold Newton into a Livable & All Age-friendly Community for all who choose to live here. In 2016, the NCOA/NDSS guided the City's application & Newton was accepted into the AARP/WHO Livable Age-Friendly Network. The overall strategy is PLAAN: Planning for a Livable All Age-friendly Newton. The framework is based on AARP/WHO's "Eight Domains," which are consistent with our focus areas validated with NCOA/NDSS data, e.g. Living & Aging in Newton; Listening Sessions; Key Interviews. Our conviction is that what is good for older people can be good for everyone in a community, regardless of age. The voices of our constituents guide us in setting priorities. To fulfill Newton's AARP/WHO commitment, NCOA/NDSS has formed Domain Action Teams with leadership, goals setting & action steps. Massachusetts AARP Age Friendly Network Manager is a hands-on advisor to our process. On behalf of the city, we will submit our formal Action Plan to AARP/WHO in 2018.

The NCOA/NDSS engages in visioning, planning, research, advocacy, raising awareness, civic participation, programs & services to enhance the lives of Newton seniors & those who care about them. We collaborate with City Departments, elected officials, community agencies, residents, neighboring communities, the State Executive Office of Elder Affairs, & have a current NCOA member serving on the Governor's Council to address aging issues in Massachusetts.

### **NCOA/NDSS Ongoing Strategic Planning and Actions**

2013: Strategic Plan facilitated by members of SOAR (a pro bono management consulting group)

2014: Living and Aging in Newton: Now and in the Future with UMass Boston Gerontology Institute

2016: AARP/WHO Membership into Livable Age-Friendly Network

2016-2017: Listening Sessions/Key Interviews with over 300 Newton residents and local agencies

2017: Set Priorities based on Listening Sessions/Key Interviews and public priority-setting sessions

2017 and Beyond:

- Focus on the Domains based on identified issues (See Tables A & B below)
- Programs & Services based on identified community issues
- NDSS Sustainability & NCOA Structure

### **Overarching Policy Support Requested from the City**

- Sustainability: Assistance to NCOA/NDSS to complete & implement Domain goals for All Age-friendly Newton
- Advocacy/Commitment: Livable/All Age-friendly is ongoing city priority; Newton is a model for age-friendliness
- Awareness: Age Friendly focus integrated into all City offices; Seniors as assets ; Excellent programs/services
- Communication: Ongoing communication line with Mayor, City Council, Staff; Promote Age Friendly to the city
- Community Buy-in: Assistance in forming a city-wide, multi-constituent support, advisory, and action group

### **Table A: Specific (Immediate Requests)**

Issue	Working Well	Needs Improvement	Requested City Response
NDSS Staffing:	NDSS Staff viewed as important Community Asset	Inadequate staffing to serve current & increasing number of seniors. Poorly staffed compared to other communities.	Increase resources to NDSS quickly; benchmark other communities. Use data/input from NDSS/NCOA.
Senior Center Building:	Good/familiar location	Inadequate building & parking- now/future. Poor building compared to other communities. Difficult to maintain due to age & condition; a barrier to participation.	Immediate feasibility study. Use NCOA/ NDSS data & information to facilitate the process. Commit to early decision & start date.

**Table B: PLAAN Domains: Initial Focus on Five of the Eight Domains**

Domain	Specific Elements	Current Now – 1 year	Mid-term 1-3 years	Longer Term 4-8 years	
Housing: Options for people to age in Newton Materials/Guidance to help people remain Safe at Home					Requested City Response
	Housing Options	Supported: Austin Street Washington Pl. Sunrise Sr. Living Accessory Apt. Needham St. Visioning	Continue to advocate/ support a variety of housing options for Seniors	Continue to advocate/ support a variety of housing options for Seniors	Current/ new development includes A-F & affordable units for all ages/capacities. Low, mid-income, & 55+ housing

	Safe at Home	Completed: Safety Check list Housing Criteria Workbook AARP Grant	Revise Materials Develop Safe at Home program based on AARP Grant results	Expand materials and programs for Safe at Home goals	Foster collaborations among NDSS/ NCOA and other City Departments.
Social/Community Participation: Combat isolation and loneliness Intergenerational programs and activities					Requested City Response
	Neighbor to Neighbor Program	Develop/test a pilot program	Expand program based on learning	Expand based on learning	Promote through Mayor’s office & City Council
	Intergenerational Collaborations with Schools	Firm connection with School Dept.	Expand existing programs New programs	Expand programming New Programs	Encourage NCOA/ NDSS relationship with School Dept.
Transportation/Mobility: Access medical appointments, social services, local events, houses of worship, etc.					Requested City Response
	Voucher Program	Enhance	Increase number of destinations & improve accessibility to help decrease isolation/ loneliness.		TAG, Planning Dept. help to increase options
	Parking Stickers	Enhance			
	Other Options	Uber, Lyft, etc.			
Communication/Information: Seniors and their support network have access to accurate, timely information Marketing & Public Awareness					Requested City Response

	NDSS/City Website	Ease of use	Develop and continually enhance ways to assure easy and timely access to information		Technical Assistance
	Awareness of All A-F activities	Identify suitable media tools			
Community Engagement: Employment & Age-Friendly Businesses Hiring Seniors as part of economic development Businesses adopt age-friendly amenities					Requested City Response
	All-A-F in Work of Chamber/Rotary	Enhance existing relationships	All-A-F Projects with measurable outcomes	All-A-F embedded in business community	Urge business community to be All-A-F

**Three Domains to be developed further:**

- Respect/Social Inclusion
  - Reduce Ageism
- Civic Participation
  - Involvement in All-A-F projects
- Community Support/Health Services
  - Access to HC services & insurance information

**Contributor:** Dr. Howard King

## **Improvement in Family Living**

### **Recommendation for Ruthanne Fuller regarding “Improvement in Family Living”**

I am a retired pediatrician with much experience reaching out to families (or “family systems”) helping them learn how to cope with mental health issues. There is no reason we can’t teach them and motivated health professionals how to learn to do so.

I hope this might include a focus on the following details:

Improving the mental health of family systems.

What do I mean by “family systems?” By that I mean “the three-generational family system.”

That would include the child, parent, and grandparents.

When families seek an evaluation of a particular problem, health professionals might come to believe parents are attempting to determine *which family member has the problem* (it could include more than one family member).

### **Additional relevant details:**

1. How long has the problem been going on for?
2. Is it getting better or worse?
3. Which parent is most concerned?
4. How have parents attempted to deal with the problem up to this time?
5. If they are concerned about the child, whom might he or she remind you of?
6. What are their worst fears?

### ***Additional Questions to Ask***

How might we incorporate this task into your model?

What should Fuller administration attempt to accomplish in year 1?

What should Fuller administration attempt to accomplish in year 4?

### **What processes would be important to accomplish these goals?**

It should include a comprehensive, respectful, confidential, and focused interview.

### **How can we get genuine, ongoing community input?**

The City of [Newton](#), consists of thirteen officially recognized villages. Like most Mass. villages, the villages of Newton do not have any legal representation, and exist mostly for cultural reasons. Most Newtonian villages contain a downtown center, post office and a unique zip code.

Under Mayor Fuller's leadership and other leaders she might designate, could use villages to implement creative and useful programs.

I, Howard King, have briefly summarized the challenge. I would be glad to discuss this in greater detail with Mayor Fuller and/or the members of this particular subcommittee.



## **Chapter 2E:**

### **Village Vitality, Economic Development and Housing Affordability**

#### **Committee Members**

Seana Gaherin

Reverend Howard Haywood

Judy Jacobson

Joe Prestejohn

Jack Prior

Jeffrey Sacks

John Sisson

#### **Village Vitality**

##### **Introduction**

The City of Newton's Comprehensive Plan (2009) outlines many strategic principles that can provide direction for practices that encourage village vitality. Solutions discussed by the mayor-elect's transition team working group on housing and village vitality echoed most of the principles set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. Pertinent elements of the Comprehensive Plan are included as the last section of the working group's recommendations.

##### **Recommendations**

###### **1. Encourage desired business activities through City policy (Year 1)**

Evaluate City regulations over small business enterprises. Conduct a cost-benefit analysis and determine a metric by which regulatory policies may, when possible, be simplified to reduce burdens on the operation of smaller retailers and restaurants in village centers. With a critical eye and private sector input, examine one-size-fits-all regulations and modify them based on the scale of an enterprise, its location in a walkable village center or in commercial spaces where active first-floor uses are preferred--and in spaces facing architectural or building code challenges.

Business owners in our working group listed several onerous policies, some of which require legal representation for what a lay person would consider simple matters. These regulatory impediments are time-consuming and expensive. Examples include permits for outdoor seating, parking, entertainment, and especially the special permit process.

As a first step, survey and interview small business owners to identify areas of opportunity for policy improvements. Consider charging the Economic Development Commission with this and other policy work, revising the Commission's mission and powers as needed. Enable the group with a small annual budget to perform projects and pursue clear objectives to better utilize the expertise of its members. Require periodic reporting to the Mayor and City Council members.

## **2. Design and adapt services to support small business activities (Year 1)**

Evaluate City existing services for small business enterprises. Revise, eliminate, consolidate--and create new--small business support services in a meaningful and sustainable program that can address these businesses' operational challenges. These challenges, as identified by our working group:

- It is difficult to attract and retain adequate levels of staffing when most retail and restaurant staff workers must commute from some distance outside of the city.
- The labor deficit drives up operators' costs, making businesses less competitive as those costs are passed on to customers.
- Much of the labor pool for Newton's small businesses reverse commutes from Boston. MBTA buses and trains can be slow, poorly scheduled, and unreliable. Commuter rail tickets are expensive, and trains schedules are not designed to accommodate these workers' schedules.
- Transportation connections are inefficient or lacking, and employees commuting on public transportation must connect the dots with trolleys, buses, and walking--and build in extra commute time to match transit schedules to their work schedules.
- Newton lacks a supply of housing that would be affordable to retail, restaurant, and other service workers.

City services should, as is possible, provide incentives for transit users, long-term parking for village center business employees, assistance and coordination by the City for groups of small businesses to obtain Workforce Training Fund grants, business mentoring, professional guidance on building codes and store design, assistance marketing the villages, and other supports.

One of the most insightful observations made by a member of our group lamented the lack of high school students who are involved with the local economy through part-time employment. Today, students are steered into academic, athletic, and volunteer activities to embellish their college applications. These pursuits are important, but work experience has been devalued. The City of Newton and Newton Public Schools should pursue activities that support local youth employment. This which would yield several benefits:

- Helping to level the playing field for local businesses seeking labor,
- Providing valuable life experiences for our youth, and
- Building more and stronger connections between the residential community and local businesses.

In Year 1, the new administration should--to suss out the above recommendations--engage local business owners, operators, business organizations, and village councils, to solicit--in structured methods and on a regular schedule--recommendations for increasing village vitality and prioritizing City services

and policy-making. That should lead to a customer relationship management (CRM) system that would ensure continuous engagement.

### **3. Develop a vision for each village and take an active role in managing these important centers (Years 1-4)**

Inventory the civic, commercial, cultural, design, historic, residential, and transportation assets of each village. In an inclusive process, engage residents, building owners, and members of the business community in a conversation about each village and goals for its future. This process should be *ongoing* and enable the City to clearly define a shared vision of what should be preserved, what can be improved, and what civic, commercial, and cultural activities should be encouraged. This process would help address challenges to village vitality by answering these and other questions:

- If public spaces and pedestrian connections are missing, how and where can they be created?
- If commercial spaces in an older building have become functionally obsolete, how can those spaces be retrofitted for different uses or that building replaced with something appropriate but more beneficial?
- To take advantage of nearby transit, how could the City encourage the creation of modern office space and shared-office or co-working spaces in village centers?
- What kind of commercial spaces attract small, independent retailers, and how can the City enable the creation of more of those spaces--or retail incubation--in new or existing buildings?

Just as every mall and shopping center has a management office, the City could provide similar services and support to its village centers. These services should include some of the following:

- Village marketing and promotion, including websites and social media to provide information on activities, events, history, and opportunities in each village.
- An “What my village means to me” essay contest, with recognition for the winning writer.
- A facade improvement program.
- A parking permit plan for employees.
- Event planning with resources and staff support for promotion, event-day management, vendor contacts, police details, and other special event needs.
- During warmer weather, a moving movie night and/or outdoor concerts near different village centers.
- Periodic forums in each village to update and engage local business operators and residents in discussions about news and trends affecting that village.

#### **4. Manage parking strategically (multiple years)**

**Manage parking holistically (Year 1).** The City should express clear strategic policies for parking management and manage parking strategically--city-wide and village by village. Street-specific parking restrictions made in the past should be reviewed and modified as needed to fit a larger parking management plan. Goals may include:

- Pricing to ensure availability for residents, visitors, employees, and commuters.
- Creating a more flexible, customer-friendly parking system.
- Simplifying parking regulations for more efficient enforcement and management,
- Providing incentives, permits, or an inventory of long-term parking for employees of small businesses.
- Designing parking requirements to encourage desired commercial uses in village centers.
- Increasing utilization of existing inventory and eliminating walkability barriers.
- Improving signage and wayfinding.
- Utilizing modern parking payment and enforcement technology.

**Pursue shared parking opportunities (Year 2).** Some village centers have areas of privately controlled parking. That parking is locked off from other uses and, at certain days and times, sits underutilized. The City should pursue public-private agreements to enable other users to share some of that private parking inventory, lessening pressures elsewhere.

**Evaluate parking requirements (Year 3).** Residential and commercial parking requirements create regulatory hurdles for small businesses and small-scale development. Sometimes the goals of these requirements may be unclear, are applied uniformly in completely different contexts, or are at odds with the goals of village vitality. The City should review, revise, and formulate parking requirements that, while addressing municipal objectives, are able to lessen the regulatory onus on small businesses and even provide incentives that attract the types of uses desired in a village center.

#### **Guidance from the 2009 Comprehensive Plan**

Village vitality strategies include “Business Implementing Actions” in the Chapter 3 on Land Use (page 3-29).

- Undertake a review of current zoning in Regional Business areas to ensure that business potential will not be lost by the “encroachment” of other land uses over time.
- Encourage a system of public transportation that helps employees and customers from both within and outside the City reach Newton’s businesses.
- Provide for business-friendly resources in City government both to encourage existing businesses to stay in the City as well as to facilitate new businesses coming to the City.

- While recognizing the importance of maintaining the City's historic buildings used by businesses, provide zoning support for the redevelopment of obsolete properties for uses that will maintain or increase the City's tax and employment base.
- Implement zoning changes that encourage well-designed mixed use as an alternative to incrementally haphazard business sprawl, particularly for areas of the City having retail use, public transportation and good pedestrian access, strengthening both business and residential uses over time, and facilitating designs which assure compatibility between commercial and residential uses where such uses adjoin.

Chapter 6 on Economic Development (page 6-7), provides seven courses of action that would serve to promote "Village Center Development":

- Plan the renewal of village centers, aiming to provide vibrant attractive village centers serving the adjacent residential communities.
- Improve parking in the village centers. Explore conducting focused or comprehensive parking studies to assess the need for parking spaces in particular locations as may be appropriate.
- Consider the designation of overlay districts to regulate land use in village centers.
- Encourage mixed use in the village centers by promoting housing above retail. Increasing density allowing mixed-use development in the village centers would increase the population within walking distance and as a result would likely expand the available range of goods and services offered there. It would also increase the stock of affordable housing located close to employment centers and public transportation.
- Attract people into the village centers at off hours by developing cultural facilities focused on the local community—small theaters, art galleries, etc.—and maintaining local parks with improved facilities such as public gardens, outdoor cafes, band stands, tennis courts etc.
- Partner between commercial property owners and the City's various departments to promote a mix of businesses responsive to the needs of the residents.
- Work closely with the Chamber of Commerce and encourage the establishment of neighborhood business associations to address broader business concerns and to organize and promote local events and festivals.

The chapter also suggests six ways the City could work to provide "Business Development Assistance" (page 6-8):

- Provide incentives for small business development in the village centers. A program seeking to develop a variety of high quality retail businesses to meet the needs of the local community would be optimal. (Participation in the State of Massachusetts' DIF program could provide the funding to build appropriate infrastructure and parking facilities.)
- As more businesses utilize the Internet as part of their business plan, support the development of advanced broadband communication throughout Newton. This may include WiFi technology in village centers.

- Facilitate the provision of technical assistance to businesses through collaboration with other economic development organizations.
- In line with the goals of the City's community development programs, encourage employment opportunities for Newton residents of low-moderate income.
- Undertake planning and improve working relationships in collaboration with local non-for-profits including colleges, universities, health care, and religious institutions.
- Maintain Newton's academic and specialized secondary school educational programs to train workers for local business.

## Housing Affordability

As Mayor-Elect Fuller stated in her Neighborhoods & Village Centers position paper:

*“Newton should be a diverse and inclusive community and a place of opportunity. To achieve these goals, the City needs a range of housing types and housing prices.”*

## An Action Plan

1. Ensure quality staffing of the Planning Department
2. Make our land use rules align with the goal of housing diversity
3. Take advantage of state initiatives that help communities achieve housing diversity
4. Make better use of City resources
5. Use local housing expertise

## Recommendations

Using a variety of strategies, the ***Village Vitality, Economic Development, and Housing Affordability subcommittee*** recommends the following action plan for the Fuller Administration to achieve the goal of wide-ranging housing types and prices.

### **Ensure quality staffing of the Planning Department**

A strong, high-quality Planning Department is essential to achieve the housing affordability goal. The [June 2016 Management & Organizational Analysis](#), completed during an extended period of unstable Department leadership, was critical of its functioning. While some improvements were made, an updated management, organizational, and role analysis should be completed, and problems identified and addressed. **Timeline: First 6 months**

### **Make our land use rules align with the goal of housing diversity**

The City’s zoning rules should reflect our comprehensive plan and our desire for a range of housing types and prices. While some residents bemoan the teardown phenomenon and the replacement of smaller existing homes with “McMansions,” this phenomenon should not surprise anyone, as ***large single-family homes are exactly what the City’s Zoning Ordinance allows and invites. We must revise our land use rules to encourage multi family housing.*** Many residents are surprised to learn that multifamily housing (more than 2 units) is not allowed in areas of the City zoned for multifamily, unless a special permit is obtained (which requires 16 votes from the City Council). This process is the same whether the project involves 3 units or 300 units! As noted in the [June 2016 Housing Needs Analysis and Strategic Recommendations](#) (“Housing Strategy”):

*“Among the features built into the Newton Zoning Ordinance is that proposals to build any type of housing other than single-family dwellings will be vulnerable to permitting delays, an unpredictable decision-making process, and considerable expense.”* (Housing Strategy, page 53)

To create opportunities for seniors to downsize and stay in the community, and to welcome young families starting out, we must revise our land use rules to encourage multifamily housing. It will take public funding to achieve affordable housing for low-income families and individuals. But we can use our land use rules to encourage alternatives to single-family homes: apartments, townhouses, and condominiums that are smaller and priced lower; market-rate housing, but at the lower end. The Housing Strategy recommends

several priorities for zoning reform ([see](#) page 55), all of which should be explored in Years 1-2. In particular, field-testing administrative approval for small projects, instead of a full-scale special permitting process, should be a high priority. [See also](#) a [proposal by members of the Newton Housing Partnership](#) for “compact housing.”

While there is substantial focus on revising the City’s Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) provisions to increase the required number of affordable units from 15 percent to 25 percent, ***unless the City’s special permitting process is reformed and projects receive special permits in a timely fashion, the IZ revisions will not likely result in substantially more housing.***

The City has developed a thoughtful tool to guide development in village centers adjacent to transit services, known as the *Mixed-Use 4 (MU4) Village Zoning District*, adopted by the City Council in 2012. Identifying areas where MU4 should be adopted proactively should be a priority for Years 1-2. Focus should also be placed on improving the quality and quantity of transit services for our village centers. In preparation, we ought to reflect on the recent Austin Street development process. The Austin Street development resulted from several years of study and planning with uncontroversial and unanimous votes by the City Council to dispose of the property and to rezone it to MU4. Why did the project subsequently become so contentious? Understanding how and why Austin Street became controversial will inform other village center development efforts

Resistance to increased density in village centers often includes concern over adequacy of parking. Proactive parking management strategies to ensure turnover and availability can aid local businesses and reduce resident concern over density. Similar efforts to manage congestion would also be beneficial.

Comprehensive zoning reform has been in process for the past several years and is likely to take several more years before it is completed. Steps should be taken to accelerate this and to ensure that broad consensus is developed around the changes. Antiquated zoning significantly raises the quantity of special permits that have to be prepared, processed, and discussed and leaves significantly ambiguity in case by case decision-making. However, the interim steps described above should be taken to align Newton’s zoning with the goal of housing diversity. **Timeline for interim zoning reform initiatives: Years 1-2**

### **Take advantage of state initiatives that help communities achieve housing diversity**

A variety of state housing tools are being used successfully by other communities. Since 2008, the state has offered [benefits to communities that advance proactive strategies](#) for planning and developing affordable housing. Newton’s Housing Strategy is a step in the right direction and provides guidance, but Newton needs a true housing production plan (HPP). The state’s [Chapter 40R program](#), developed in 2004, provides benefits to communities that create “smart growth” zoning districts. Newton should look for opportunities to create such districts. An initiative recently announced by Governor Baker, the [Housing Choice Initiative](#) rewards communities that produce housing with priority access to state funds (including infrastructure and school building funds) and offers a new state grant program for “choice” communities. Other communities are making progress! [See](#), for example, [Needham, a community that has reached the 10 percent affordable housing goal](#) and is still going strong. The Fuller administration should evaluate all opportunities for Newton to participate in these and other state housing initiatives. **Timeline: 12-18 months**

### **Make better use of City resources**

Surplus City property and City funding are both important resources to achieve housing affordability goals

- **Evaluate the disposition process for surplus City-owned property**



Surplus City buildings and land represent opportunities to create housing that meets community needs. The City's re-use process, however, is lengthy and cumbersome and the resulting projects are not always optimal.

One example of a surplus property that could have been made available for housing much sooner is the Stanton Avenue water tower site. For several years, Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly (JCHE), owner of the adjacent Golda Meir House, has sought to acquire the water tower site and expand its affordable senior housing program. The Request for Proposals is finally moving forward, but the process of identifying surplus property for housing should be evaluated to make it more swift and efficient.

The surplus property at 70 Crescent Street is another example of a property that has undergone a lengthy disposition process and is proceeding on a path that may not be in the best interests of the City. The proposed housing on the site will be costly, even with no land acquisition costs, in part because the City itself is the developer and public construction laws, which add a premium of 15-20%, are triggered. It is also highly unusual for a municipality to be the owner/landlord of an apartment building. This pilot approach should be carefully evaluated to determine if it is an appropriate model for housing development in the City.

The City has also seen resurgent need for school building space and some have looked back regretfully on some surplus decisions regarding school facilities.

These recent examples illustrate the need for a hard look at the City's disposition process for surplus property. **Timeline: 12-18 months**

- **Evaluate the City's housing funding programs**

The City's various housing funding programs should be reviewed to determine ways to increase their effectiveness in creating housing opportunities for low-income families and individuals. The City's Homebuyer Assistance Program, for example, has been inactive since 2012. The Planning Department is now seeking substantial Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding to restructure the program, but only on a limited basis. This request ought to be reviewed to determine its adequacy and whether it will further the goal of additional affordable housing. While a Municipal Affordable Housing Trust (MAHT) would be helpful in delivering funding in a more timely way, a MAHT does not bring with it any *additional* funding and may not be worth the effort to obtain the City Council's approval. **Timeline: 12-18 months**

### **Use local housing expertise**

From 1990 until 2016 when the Newton Housing Partnership (NHP) fizzled due to Mayor Warren's failure to appoint members, the City made widespread use of resident volunteers with expertise in housing. The NHP had a long history of helping to shape City policy and providing sophisticated analyses of affordable housing proposals. While the number of volunteer boards and committees in the City needs to be carefully managed, ***there is a wealth of housing expertise in the City that could and should be tapped.***

Some residents have expressed disappointment with the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), specifically with regard to the repeated unsuccessful assertion of the Chapter 40B 1.5 percent general land area safe harbor, and the chilling effect this has had on housing production in the City. Others have noted that achieving a 40B safe harbor allows the City to better negotiate projects consistent with neighborhood and City goals. Regardless of whether the City is in a position to achieve a Chapter 40B safe harbor now or in the future, it is important that the ZBA be comprised of individuals who embrace the goal of diversity of housing types with a range of prices. **Timeline: Year 1**

## **Additional Thoughts on Newton's Zoning Challenges**

Mayor-elect Fuller has articulated the values of diversity and inclusion, with Newton as a place of opportunity for its residents. Many share these values and would agree with the need for availability of wide-ranging housing types and housing prices. It makes sense to fix our land use rules to achieve these goals, though the process is likely to evoke much emotion. Newton is an unusual community, compared with other Massachusetts communities, in that so many of its land use decisions are made by such a large body of elected officials. This makes permitting and development highly politicized and requires that City Councilors, many of whom are not experts in development, zoning, or planning, decide these issues in a highly-charged environment.

In that context, we urge the Fuller Administration to work with the City Council to articulate a vision for the City and establish guiding principles for development through the City's Zoning Code. The Fuller administration should expand the capacity of the Planning and Zoning Boards with the goal of giving those Boards a larger role in implementing the City's policies and the vision of the City Council. This will serve the interests of the City by laying the groundwork for two levels of special permit review (for large and small projects), an approach used by many similar communities, and recommended by this Village Vitality, Economic Development, and Housing Affordability subcommittee.

The City should create design guidelines to express to developers the City's vision for its future growth. With an out-of-date Zoning Code and lack of broad guiding principles for development, the City is constantly reacting to development proposals, not affirmatively guiding the development process. Proactively defining a vision and requirements for the Northland project is likely one of the highest impact activities the administration can take in its 1<sup>st</sup> year both in terms of achieving affordable housing goals as well as potentially including a means to address school capacity requirements for the project and in that area of the city. The Riverside project, permitted in 2013 but yet to break ground, also likely has an opportunity to be revisited given its current state.

The Fuller Administration should consider hosting a "Visions for Village Vitality" design charrette to bring together Newton residents and businesses with diverse views of development in an effort to discuss viewpoints outside the context of any particular development projects. Properly staffed and facilitated, this type of event could begin the process of articulating common goals and objectives for the future direction of the City.

## **Chapter 2F:**

### **Environmental Sustainability**

#### **Committee**

Jonathan Kantar

Jay Walter

John Dalzell

Tom Gloria

Amy Sangiolo

## Preface

The Fuller Administration is committed to a more sustainable and resilient Newton and to working with citizens and stakeholders to lead and act to ensure the long-term health and well-being of our community, our region, and our planet. This document is premised on the notion that the Administration is committed to making the necessary monetary, staffing and resource priorities to ensure that sustainability is an integral part in every decision. Recognizing that Climate Change is a priority for this City as a part of a global society, the recommendations set forth in this paper hope to guide the City toward a more sustainable future.

## Vision

A sustainable built and natural environment that supports human health and well-being and ensures a thriving community for our current and future generations.

## Guiding Themes

1. Engagement and Empowerment - Draw upon the tremendous resources in our City government staff, residential, business, and institutional communities to craft action plans that lead to implementation.
2. Organizational Leadership - Foster cross departmental collaboration and practice innovation through a horizontal management structure that is rooted in the Mayor's Office and ensures sustainability in all policies.
3. Action Driving Change/Lead by Example - Finalize and implement the Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Action Plan (CAP), update the Energy Action Plan (EAP), and initiate a Carbon Free Newton 2050 "road mapping" plan.
4. Measurement and Accountability - Establish performance metrics for key sustainability indicators to ensure we meet our goals and enable re-assessment of efforts based on results.

## Immediate Actions - Year One

### 1. Leadership and Engagement

Leverage the Mayor's leadership capacity to engage and empower our citizens, stakeholders, and municipal employees to envision a more sustainable Newton and to set ambitious goals by:

- Drawing upon the talent and expertise of our municipal employees to identify existing sustainability practices, and to set and implement new goals.
- Support the Mayor in engaging and empowering our talented municipal employees to envision and implement ambitious sustainability goals.
- Develop and communicate Newton's sustainability values and goals through engaged participation by our citizens.
- Cultivate the support of and participation by the City Council and School Committee through briefings, educational resources, and engagement.
- Identify departmental leaders to identify and improve existing practices.

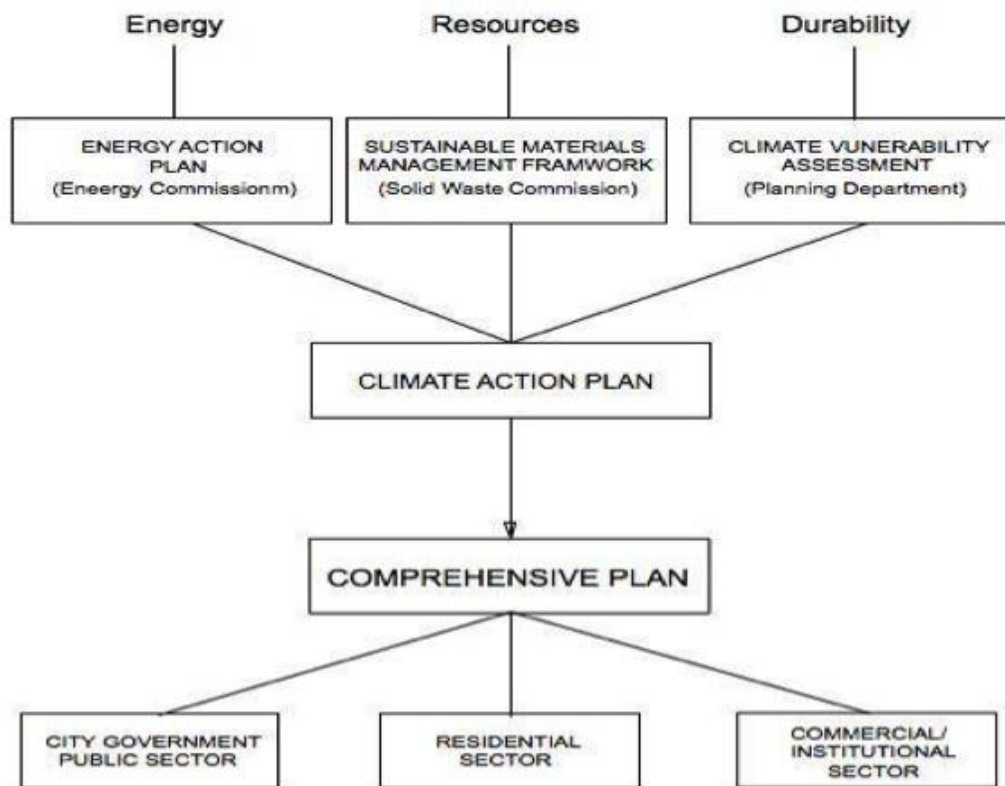
- Augment city employee job descriptions with sustainability responsibilities including engaging stakeholders and developing liaisons.

## **2. Expanding the Sustainability Director (SD) Role**

- Redefine the role of the Sustainability Director (“SD”) as a senior leader within the Mayor’s Office with appropriate oversight authority and staff. The SD should:
- Engage management staff across city departments to establish citywide and department sustainability goals, plans and indicators.
- Engage in planning and construction efforts interacting with the Design Selection Committee (DSC) and the Design Review Committee (DRC).
- Assess Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) opportunities.
- Participate on the Energy Commission, Solid Waste Commission and similar boards to advance the City’s sustainability mission and goals.
- Lead and implement a Climate Action Plan and Energy Action Plan in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan update.

## **3. Working Together**

- Develop an interdepartmental sustainability team to coordinate City efforts (e.g., transportation, housing, economic development, parks and rec., building & construction, school, and public safety, etc.).
- Engage with community groups to coordinate and support sustainable efforts (e.g., Green Newton, Newton Conservators, HPBC, Bike Newton).
- Create Public-Private partnerships with commercial, academic and institutional leaders to:
  - set sustainability goals, plans and actions,
  - initiate pilot projects (e.g., CAP development), and
  - create incentive programs.
- Advocate State and Federal agencies to support Newton’s sustainability goals and efforts, including:
  - promotion of renewable and energy efficient solutions
  - infrastructure development coordination,
  - water and sewer capacity improvement,
  - mobility optimization, and
  - affordable housing.
- Prioritize sustainability within our school community through coordinated efforts by the Mayor, Superintendent, School Committee, staff, faculty, parents, and the students to ensure:
  - a safe and productive learning environment,
  - equitable access to resources, and
  - curriculum that reinforces concepts of sustainability.
- Create a sustainability "clearinghouse" resource via a Newton Sustainability Dashboard (See: Cambridge <http://sustainabilitydashboard.cambridgema.gov/>)
- Coordinate following action plans with the Comprehensive Plan such that goals are clear, measurable progress is reported, and multidisciplinary talents are brought together:
  - *Climate Action Plan (CAP)*. Mandate the SD with City departments to implement CAP based on recently completed Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA).
  - *Energy Action Plan (EAP)*. The Energy Commission, SD and Public Buildings Dept. are to be responsible for aligning and updating the Energy Action Plan to the CAP.
  - *Sustainable Materials Management Framework (SMMF) plan*. Mandate the Solid Waste Commission, the SD, and Purchasing Department, to develop an SMMF implementation plan.



#### **4. Sustainability in Action**

- Energy Aggregation (an effective action to reduce GHG emissions in the near term and an easy “win” for all).
  - lead with minimum default rate of 53% renewables, 40% above state mandate of 13% (supported by Green Newton survey).
  - commit to outreach to ensure highest default rate (opt up to 100%).
- Renewable and Clean Energy and Energy Storage:
  - advocate for renewable and clean energy systems including wind (where appropriate) and energy storage systems to reduce peak demand and promote grid stability.
- Open Space
  - develop a comprehensive strategy for acquiring open space, improving access, maintenance, and preservation.
  - seek a resolution with BC to protect and preserve Webster Woods.
  - work with Tree Warden & Newton Tree Conservancy to set 2022 goal of net increase of trees, culling invasive trees and adding natives.
- Public Buildings
  - target net zero practices for new construction & major renovations.
  - support “Design and Construction Guidelines for Sustainable Construction” in Newton.
  - assess and inventory existing building envelope and system status.
- Real Estate Development:
  - ensure new development is sustainable, resilient, and aligns with City’s GHG emission reduction goals including new zoning and Special Permit standards for site development (e.g., LEED, SITES).
  - restructure development fees to mitigate the impact of new projects on City and utility infrastructure and environment.
  - launch a building energy use disclosure ordinance including performance benchmarking (see Boston BERDO).
- Zoning and Regulations
  - amend zoning to promote smart growth and compact development around transportation hubs and village centers and to include mixes of uses and affordability, and reduced parking requirements.
  - amend zoning to expand multifamily residential sub-districts and allow “small house development” (smaller lots / smaller homes).
  - disincentivize tear-downs, huge houses, and bloated additions with fees and more restrictive zoning dimensional requirements.
  - amend zoning to promote roof form and use for solar PV and address issues of solar shading of existing installations.
- Green Communities Act and Commitment
  - fully fund the current 2010 Plan to reduce municipal energy use 20% from the 2008 baseline (achieved a 9% reduction as of 2016).
  - continue to improve City fleet with high mileage and electric vehicles. Optimize vehicle sharing among departments.
- Complete and Smart Streets
  - continue to improve and expand pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure including separate bicycle tracks to enhance safety.
  - continue to develop efficient, SMART infrastructure to reduce congestion through coordinated traffic signaling, better signage, turning lanes, other traffic handling and mitigation measures.
- Infrastructure and Public utilities:

- Water pipe leak detection and reline or replace old pipe. -- Complete our 20 year Strategic Plan to re-line and replace our 300 miles of water and sewer lines.
- Better regulate private water and sewer 'lateral' lines, including mandating inspections when properties are sold.
- Bolster our gas leak detection, monitoring and repair efforts w/ Eversource
- work with the tree department and utilities to reduce power line damage from trees falling during storm events
- Electric charging stations: provide at municipal buildings and City centers; encourage at private parking areas
- continue to coordinate repair and replacement of utilities to minimize street construction. DRC and DSC responsibilities and process
- Expand the Energy Investment Fund
  - raise weighted priority of energy efficiency measures within CIP.
  - expand the "Energy Investment Fund" established in 2010 to better capture energy rebates and grants and use to cost savings to secure funds for continued energy efficiency investments.
- Waste management policies:
  - Institute pay-as-you-throw to reduce household disposal rates.
  - Expand recycling to include commercial and institutional sectors.
  - Develop a curbside composting program.
  - Develop a localized solution to yard waste composting.
  - Discourage single use containers and packaging.
  - Build awareness of purchasing practice relation to waste issues.
- Subsidy/Incentive Programs: access various state, regional, and federal:
  - MassSave, APS Alternative Energy Credits (AEC) [AEC for thermal energy](#), MA Clean Energy Commission energy initiatives, MAPC

## Next Actions - Year Two Plus

The first two (2) years of our planning efforts will involve understanding our energy usage, initiating various efficiency and reduction strategies, and determining possible new measures moving forward. This understanding will guide the parallel implementation and improvement of the EAP, the CVA, and overarching vision of a CAP. The Comprehensive Plan will embody the guidance of all three plans.

- Common elements to various planning efforts:
  - dynamic development process that will provide understanding and direction for future sustainability efforts.
  - review existing goals and performance and provide feedback.
  - identify and employ stakeholders to begin developing the new EAP.
  - develop performance metrics for ongoing evaluation to adjust the plan.
- Energy Action Plan (EAP) and Climate Vulnerability Assessment/Action Plan:
  - initially inventory assessment tools with some offering of direction - foundation for goal setting.
  - will inform technical and methodological advances.
  - in concert with development of CAP, will become the road map for reducing GHG emissions.
- Climate Action Plan:
  - coordination and prioritization of goals.
  - assessment of practical efforts.
  - identification of opportunities for leadership.
  - review and re-evaluation of efforts based on measured results.



- coordination with Comprehensive Plan (concurrent efforts).

### **Continued Actions - Year Four**

- Implement Carbon Free Newton 2050 including early milestones.
- Launch comprehensive Sustainability Action Planning process, drawing together the CAP, EAP, and SMMF and involving our private, commercial, and institutional sectors and city government.
- Support decarbonization of mobility, by supporting human powered modes (walking and biking), electrification of vehicles, and public transportation.
- Develop an ethos of conservation and reduced consumption among the City and the citizenry to reduce the energy and materials we consume.
- Expand collaboration with surrounding communities to advance building regulations, energy policy, climate change

### Addendum, Reports, Exhibits

- A. Ch 2a United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous People
- B. Ch 2a Asian American News Data
- C. Ch 2a Art Performance Space in Newton
- D. Ch 2d Housing Criteria for a Livable Newton for Everyone
- E. Ch 2d Poor Availability of Housing for 60+ in Newton Oct 09 15
- F. Ch 2d Driving Life Expectancy of Older Drivers
- G. Ch 2d Newton Senior Survey-Sept. 2014-Mobility-related Excerpts
- H. Ch 2d Mobility Needs of Older Adults, TAG Meeting Notes June 2013
- I. Ch 2d Newton Census by Age Cohort 2014 and 2017
- J. Ch 2e Pedestrian Access and Removal of Architectural Access Barriers



United Nations  
**DECLARATION**  
on the **RIGHTS**  
of **INDIGENOUS**  
**PEOPLES**

Published by the United Nations  
07.58681—March 2008—4,000





# AsAmNews

GO TO...



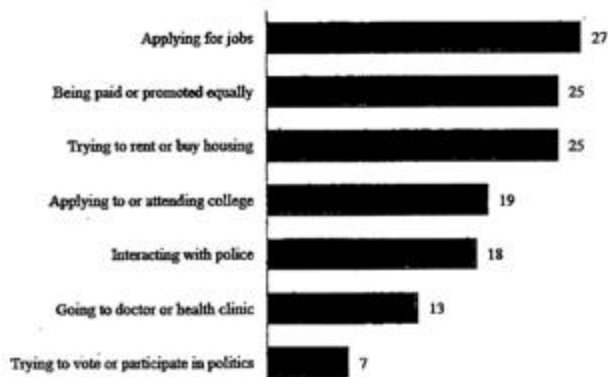
## ASIAN AMERICANS

Dec 6, 2017 [Leave a comment](#)

### High Number of Asian Americans Say They Face Discrimination

posted by Randall

Figure 1:  
Percent of Asian Americans Saying They Have Ever Been Personally  
Discriminated Against In Each Situation Because They Are Asian

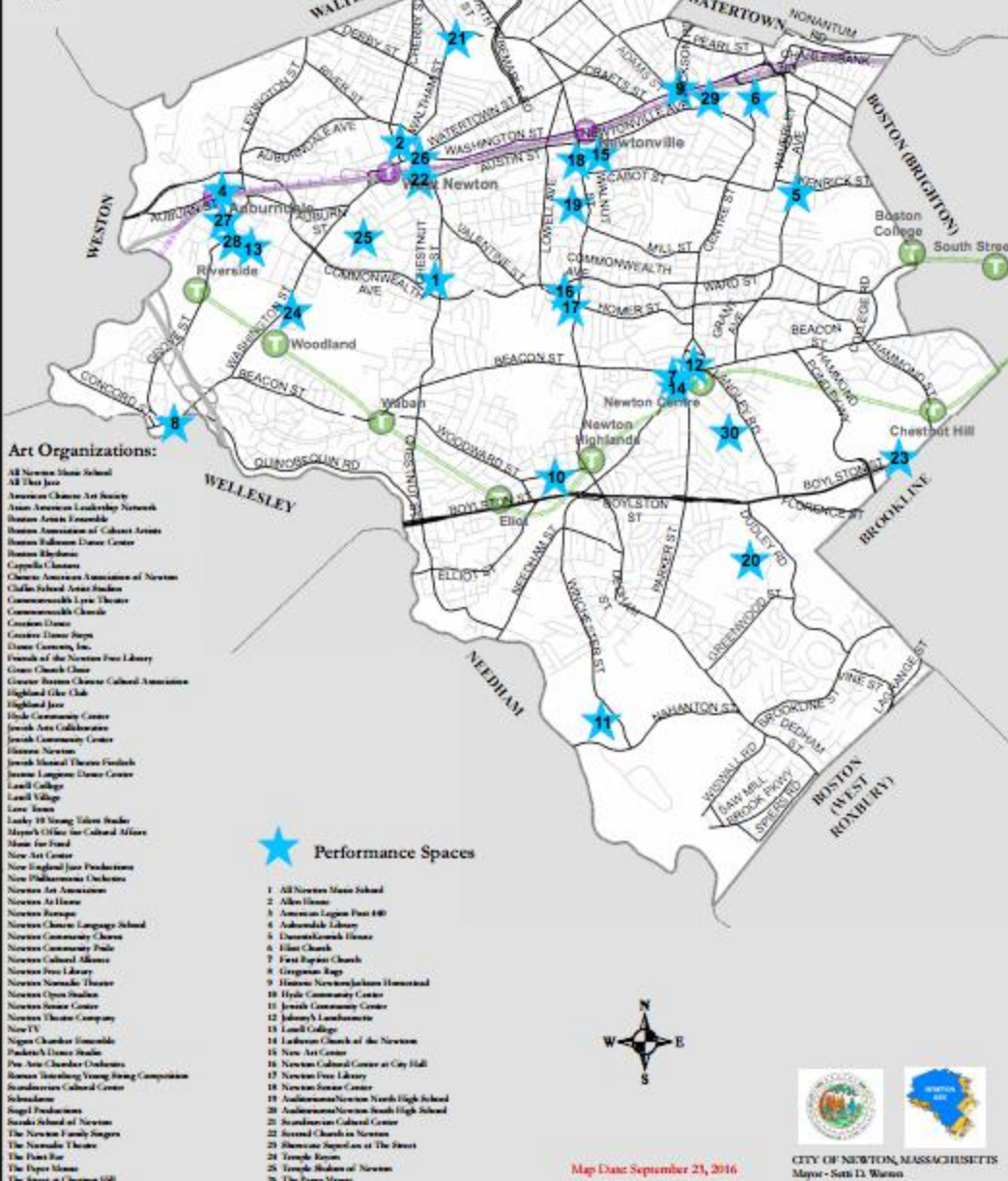


NPR/Robert Wood Johnson Foundation/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, *Discrimination in America: Experiences and Views of Asian Americans*, January 26 – April 9, 2017. S5/Q13, S6/Q15, Q17, Q19, Q21, S7/Q23, S8/Q25. Each question asked of half-sample. Total N=500 Asian American U.S. adults.

A poll of a representative sample of 500 Asian Americans found a significant number in the community say they have personally experienced discrimination.

# Performance Spaces

City of Newton, Massachusetts



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**Newton Council on Aging & Newton Department of Senior Services**

**Housing Criteria for a Livable and Friendly Newton for Everyone**

**These criteria are intended to be used a guide for developers in the design of housing for older people, city officials to guide decisions on age-friendly housing developments, and individuals to assess their housing requirements.**

The Newton Council on Aging (NCOA) and the Newton Department of Senior Services (NDSS) work to create and sustain Newton as an Age-friendly/Livable Community. Essential to this vision is adequate and appropriate housing for people of all ages; age-friendly homes are suitable and desirable for all members of the community. We believe that housing built to accommodate changing health and safety needs for a growing older population is essential for enhancing Newton's future as a diverse community. In general, we support the creation of a diversity of housing that accommodates a wide range of household incomes within the city. Specifically, we advocate for housing with the following characteristics:

**General**

- ☐ Environmentally friendly, energy efficient, and low maintenance

**Community Environment** Pedestrian-friendly access to:

- ☐ Food shopping and pharmacies
- ☐ Public transportation
- ☐ Social gathering places
- ☐ Open green spaces

**Overall Home Environment**

- ☐ Living space, bedroom, bath, kitchen and laundry on one floor
- ☐ Level flooring throughout the house
- ☐ Slip-resistant walkways and entryways
- ☐ Handrails on both sides of all stairways
- ☐ Lever style handles on doors and faucets
- ☐ Electrical outlets 18 inches off the floor
- ☐ Easy-touch, rocker-style light switches 42 inches off the floor
- ☐ Anti-scald feature on faucets
- ☐ Generous electrical outlets to accommodate future technology or medical-equipment needs, particularly in the bedroom, den and kitchen
- ☐ Bright, non-glare lighting, with good task lighting over sink, stove and work areas.
- ☐ Common spaces in multi-unit buildings for residents to socialize

<b>Entryways and Exits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> At least one no-step pathway into the dwelling</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Covered entrance to protect from inclement weather</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bright lighting inside and outside entries</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Space near entrance to place packages</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Easy-open door locks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Zero-threshold doorway</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> High-visibility house numbers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lighted, easily reachable doorbell</li> </ul>	
<b>Kitchen</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Easy-glide, self-close drawers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Accessible garbage-disposal switch</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Multi-height, rounded-edge countertops</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Counter space next to sink &amp; appliances</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Easy-access storage, such as pull-out pantry or adjustable-height shelving</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Front-mounted appliance controls that are highly visible or touch operated</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Extra electrical outlets for small appliances; outlets under countertops</li> </ul>	<b>Bathrooms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Non-skid floor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Walk-in shower</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Countertops with rounded edges</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Built-in bench or seating in shower</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Easy-glide drawers that close automatically</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maneuvering space that accommodates a 60-inch turning radius</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hand-held, adjustable-height showerhead with easily operable controls</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Grab bars or wall-blocking for future installation in tub, shower and near toilet</li> </ul>
<b>Stairways and Halls</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No open or see-through risers on stairs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Calm, not disorienting, carpet pattern</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Chair rail with 1" ledge along hallways</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rocker style light switches at top and bottom of stairs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stair treads that accommodate firm placement of the foot</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Contrasting color at front edges of steps, for visual orientation, or non-slip adhesive strips</li> </ul>	<b>Bedrooms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Multi-level shelving and clothes rod in closet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Quality wire mesh shelving for visibility</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Avoid bi-fold or accordion closet doors</li> </ul>
<b>Laundry</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Non-slip flooring</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Front-loading washer/dryer, stacked or on raised platform, front controls</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Laundry sink and countertop no more than 34 inches above floor with knee space below for seated users</li> </ul>	<b>Additional Recommendations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adaptable space that enables reconfiguration without unnecessary disruption/expense</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Base cabinets with removable shelves to accommodate seated users</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Color-contrast front edges on counter tops</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Drawer-style dishwasher or raised platform to reduce bending</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> D-shaped or pull-style cabinet/drawer handles</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Toilet center 18 inches from any side wall, tub, or cabinet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Comfort height toilet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 36-inch-wide doors (or for interior doors, pocket doors)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ample and level maneuvering room (5 feet by 5 feet) in entryway</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Emergency alert feature (esp. bathrooms)</li> </ul>



## Availability of Appropriate Housing for Newton Seniors Age 60+\*

### Demographics:

Residents Age 60+:      2010: 18,636                      2020: 22,294 (Projected)

Households with at least one member age 60+ (2008 – 2012):   12,090 (39%)\*\*

### Finance:

Median Household Income (in 2012 inflation adjusted dollars)

Householder age 65 and older: \$61,621

Men age 65+ living alone: \$30,438

Women Age 65+ living alone: \$26,300

Household Income distribution in Newton (in 2012 inflation-adjusted dollars) age 65+:

Under \$25,000: 28%	44% have income of \$49,999 or less
\$25,000 to \$49,999: 16%	
\$50,000 to 99,999: 22%	Total: 66% have income less than \$100,000
\$100,000 or more: 34%	

### Housing Preference, Supply & Demand:

Housing preference "if a change in health required a move in the next five years" – Age 60-79:

Condos: 41%    Apartment Building: 18%

Supply: Assumption - most "downsizers" prefer an elevator building, one-floor living, easy access, and no stairs.

#### Elevator Buildings in Newton (8 or more units)

<u>Condos</u>	<u>Rental</u>
• Number of Buildings 17	• Number of Buildings: 7
• Number of Floors: 17-3	• Number of Floors: 6-3
• Total Number of Units: 1,181	• Number of Units: 805
Total number of Units in Elevator Buildings: <b>1,986*</b>	
Total number of Units Available at any point: 5% average vacancy (100 units of different sizes)	

### Demand:

Households with at least one person 60+ (2008 – 2012): 12,090 (39%)

\*Example: Assume 1/3 households want to downsize – need **3,990 units**: 2,004 additional

\*Example: Assume ¼ households want to downsize – need: **3,028 units**: 1, 042 additional

Only includes residents and not seniors who want to move to Newton to be near children, relatives or friends.

\*Data from U.S. Census 2010; 2010 American Community Survey; Living and Aging in Newton, UMass Boston; State Department of Public Safety; Newton Assessors Department. Compiled by Newton Council on Aging, Housing Sub-Committee, October 2015.

\*\*Don't know how many already live in elevator buildings.



## Driving Life Expectancy of Persons Aged 70 Years and Older in the United States

[Daniel J. Foley](#), MS, [Harley K. Heimovitz](#), PhD, [Jack M. Guralnik](#), MD, PhD, and [Dwight B. Brock](#), PhD

### Abstract

**Objectives.** We estimated total life expectancy and driving life expectancy of US drivers aged 70 years and older.

**Methods.** Life table methods were applied to 4699 elderly persons who were driving in 1993 and reassessed in a 1995 survey.

**Results.** Drivers aged 70 to 74 years had a driving life expectancy of approximately 11 years. A higher risk of mortality among men as a cause of driving cessation offset a higher risk of driving cessation not related to mortality among women that resulted in similar driving life expectancies.

**Conclusions.** Nationwide, many elderly drivers quit driving each year and must seek alternative sources of transportation. Because of differences in life expectancy, women require more years of support for transportation, on average, than men after age 70.

The health and longevity of the elderly population in the United States are at unprecedented levels, and many older persons continue to drive throughout their eighth and ninth decades of life.<sup>1,2</sup> Both the aging of the post-World War II “baby boom” generation and an increasing proportion of women who drive among those turning 65 years old will contribute to a rapidly growing number of older drivers in the US population in the years ahead. In addition, driving exposure in the elderly population is at an all-time high. Male drivers aged 65 years and older average about 10 000 miles of driving per year, an increase of 74% over the last 3 decades. In contrast, elderly female drivers average 5000 miles per year, a 31% increase in driving exposure over the same period.<sup>3</sup>

Compared with middle-aged drivers, older drivers have about a 3-fold increased risk of crashing per mile driven. However, older persons drive markedly fewer miles annually than middle-aged drivers, resulting in an equivalent annualized risk for crashing.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, older drivers, on average, have little increase in their annual cost of automobile insurance during their transition from middle age. In contrast, teenaged drivers, on average, have a very high risk of crashing on an annual basis, regardless of miles driven, and pay much higher premiums for their automobile insurance. The greater threat to an older driver is the risk of fatality from an automobile

crash. Although the annual risk of crashing remains fairly stable over the years of driving, the risk of dying after involvement in an automobile crash increases significantly with age. Compared with middle-aged drivers of the same sex and involved in the same severity of crash, older drivers are 3 times more likely to die as a result of the crash.<sup>5</sup> Nearly 5000 drivers aged 70 years and older were involved in fatal crashes in 1999, a 42% increase in the number over the preceding decade.<sup>6</sup> This trend for an increasing number of elderly driver fatalities is expected to continue as long as the proportion of all drivers who are aged 70 years and older continues the rise observed over the past few years—for example, from 8% in 1989 to 9% in 1999.

In general, older drivers decide for themselves when to quit, a decision that often stems from the onset and progression of medical conditions that affect visual, physical, and cognitive functioning and consequently driving skill.<sup>7–10</sup> In addition, studies show that cessation is not an easy decision and may have consequences such as depressed mood and less social engagement due to loss of mobility.<sup>11,12</sup> The role of health professionals in assisting with this decision continues to be discussed, as does the role of state policies for license renewal.<sup>13,14</sup> Of paramount concern to the older driver who is pondering cessation is the availability and cost of alternative sources of transportation.<sup>15</sup> Such sources may include formal services such as public transportation systems, taxis, and community-sponsored or church-sponsored van services. More informal support typically comes from family and friends who live nearby and can drive.

Few epidemiological studies have addressed the implications of this transition to dependency on others for transportation among elderly drivers in the context of public health planning and provision of services. We used data from a longitudinal study of aging in a nationally representative sample of older adults to estimate both total life expectancy and driving life expectancy, which can be used to project the number of years of life, on average, in which older persons will be dependent on alternative sources of transportation. In addition, we estimated the number of elderly persons nationwide who do not drive and the number who quit driving each year, and we assessed the effect of visual, physical, and cognitive impairments on their risk for driving cessation.

Excerpts from "Living and Aging in Newton: Now and in the Future" (September 2014)  
Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging, Gerontology Institute  
McCormack Graduate School of Policy & Global Studies, U Mass. Boston  
(italics and bolding added)

Full report available on Newton's website, Department of Senior Services at:  
<http://www.newtonma.gov/civicax/filebank/documents/74184>

Most survey respondents of all ages (90%) indicated that they still drive themselves, although many noted that they use strategies to modify their driving and make their driving safer and easier (such as avoiding driving in bad weather). Nearly half (46%) of respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with transportation options in Newton and in their villages; however, many transportation challenges remain, especially for those who do not drive, including public transportation options that are perceived as inadequate or inconvenient, and issues pertaining to the "walkability" of Newton. As a result, a significant number of Seniors, many of whom live alone, and who do not have reliable transportation or large social networks, may be at risk for isolation, which, over time, can influence their health, wellbeing, and ability to live independently in Newton.

\* \* \* \*

Results from the resident survey suggest that a large proportion of the City's older residents have lived in Newton for many years. The majority (63%) of respondents age 50 and older reported living in Newton for 25 years or longer, and nearly half (49%) have lived in their current residences for that long. *Thus, much of the growth in the older population has occurred as a result of Newton residents aging in place. By and large, aging in place is a common goal in Newton, as indicated by the 88% of Senior respondents who stated it is important to them to stay in Newton as long as possible, and 78% of Seniors who said it is important to remain in their current village as long as possible.* The vast majority of survey respondents (72%) reported that they lived in single-family homes.

\* \* \* \*

A sizeable proportion (23%) of residents who are age 60 and older live alone,

**with a large percentage of these living in homes that they own. Newton's households headed by residents who are age 65 and older have a higher median income (\$61,621) relative to older people in Massachusetts overall (\$36,282); however, many older adults in Newton experience economic disadvantages that could lead to economic insecurity. For example, more than 25% of residents age 65 and older report incomes under \$25,000 annually. Finally, many older people in Newton experience some level of disability, which could limit their functioning and impact their ability to live independently in their homes and community. Overall, 4 out of ten residents age 75 and older experience at least one disability.**

**\* \* \* \***

**Focus group participants were recruited from Chinese-American and Russian-American residents who live in Newton. In general, there was a high level of commonality between these focus groups and survey responses. All Chinese-American participants had lived in Newton for a very long time (31 years on average), compared to Russian-American participants, who lived in Newton for 5 or fewer years. Most participants in both groups stated that staying in Newton as long as possible was a priority for them. . . . The groups identified transportation as a serious problem, which hindered their ability to live independently in Newton, including accessibility and parking problems. Some participants in the Russian-American group indicated that they sometimes felt stranded due to their limited transportation options, despite the central location of their residence in Newton.**

**\* \* \* \***

Collectively, results from the needs assessment study were used to develop the following specific recommendations to assist the City of Newton Department of Senior Services, and other City offices as they plan for the future provision of programs and services to older Newton residents:

- **Plan for substantial growth of the senior population in coming years;**
- **Consider ways to leverage existing services and programs within the community;**
- **Support convenient, affordable, and reliable local transportation options for residents;**
- **Use planning for the expanding senior population as an opportunity to promote livability of Newton for all residents;**



## **CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

### **Transportation Advisory Group (TAG)**

TAG Meeting Notes 6-26-2013

**Setti D. Warren, Mayor**

TAG members present: Andreae Downs (chair), Lois Levin, Holly Gunner, David Koses, Bill Paille, Adam Peller

Guests: Frank Caro, Ald. Vicki Danberg, Nancy Scammon, Marion Knapp (CoA), Alice Bailey (Dept. Senior Services), Audrey Cooper (CoA), Naomi Gordon, Ald. Deb Crossley, Ald. Ruthanne Fuller

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Patrick Baxter  
Alicia Bowman  
Andreae Downs, Chair  
Lucia Dolan  
Les Fiorenzo  
Holly Gunner  
Candace Havens  
David Koses  
Lois Levin  
Capt. Howard Mintz  
Srdjan Nedeljkovic  
William Paille  
Adam Peller  
Sean Roche  
Bob Rooney  
David Turocy

#### **Pedestrian Issues and Older People**

Holly introduced U. Mass. Emeritus Professor of Gerontology Frank Caro, a former member of Brookline's finance committee, who has organized a group called Brookline CAN (Community Aging Network). BCAN works with many municipal departments on concrete actions to support Brookline's population as it ages.

She noted that between the 2002 and 2012 City Census, the cohort of Newton population between 60-69 increased 69.4%. In the same period, the population age 70-75 increased 22.3%. This means that we

have a huge ramp-up in our senior population, and the rate of that ramp-up as our younger seniors age is about three times as fast. We need to make the city work for a larger-than-ever aging population.

Caro introduced the concept of Age-Friendly Cities, which support participation of older people through interconnected elements. He named two of roughly 8 themes:

- Density—people are in close proximity to each other and resources, houses with universal design, transit, grocery stores, banks, post office, etc.
- Transportation—there are multiple non-car alternatives, older people can walk successfully because things are close by, there are good sidewalks, safe crossings, fill-in transit services and affordable taxis

Benefits of walking for seniors

- Independence
- Health & exercise
- Sustain communities—social

Obstacles to walking:

- Stiff joints
- Balance
- Hearing loss
- Vision decline (tripping)
- Less energy, so can't walk as far as when younger
- Slower

Falling on sidewalks (or elsewhere) is more often fatal—short or longer term—for seniors, and can start a downward spiral for a senior's health.

Naomi described her difficulties resuming an active life after a fall 9 weeks ago on a crack in the sidewalk in Brookline. She used to swim laps regularly for exercise. She may never be able to do that again.

According to federal standards, a deviance of  $\frac{1}{2}$ " is too much in a sidewalk.

Senior Safety factors in the environment:

- Dense development
- Smooth sidewalk networks
- Safe street crossings—narrow, marked crosswalks, pedestrian islands, signals, good lighting
- No ice
- Benches (ca  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile apart)
- No obstacles, like tree wells
- Shade

B-CAN finding ways to address these issues—collaborate with Council on Aging; vehicle for more citizen participation: Livable Communities Advocacy Committee

- ✓ Bring attention to Brookline's great features
- ✓ Make things better for older people
- ✓ Establish relationships with all town departments and invite them to BCAN meetings
- ✓ Use Brookline's online system to report problems observed that need fixing
- ✓ Establishing visibility with the citizenry. People contact them about issues they hadn't thought about.
- ✓ Got town to commit to being an Age-Friendly City as defined by the World Health Organization

Practical accomplishments:

- Volunteers with stopwatches documented an unsafe crossing on Rt. 9 near the Reservoir
- Volunteers monitor the success of sidewalk clearance in business districts & report violations to the town for enforcement
- Moving to a pedestrian access study around areas with heavy concentration of seniors
- Advocating for parks to include parking for easy access by seniors and restrooms
- Overnight parking for caregivers

Vicki applauded the snow task force, and noted how important it is for Newton to acknowledge that residential snow clearing is a benefit for seniors, not a burden. She also highlighted how Newton's proposed park at Waban Reservoir in Chestnut Hill might also benefit from senior parking.

Caro noted how park loops for walking, with benches, were ideal for seniors getting exercise

Ruthanne asked what essential community resources Caro would identify. He noted groceries, drugstores, banks, transit. Others noted coffee, mail boxes, hardware stores.

Deb noted that sidewalk and crossing improvements also help people with disabilities remain independent and were often preferred by families with young children. But given that the city's resources are few, how distribute the improvements fairly? Had B-CAN partnered with the disability community, safe routes to school or others?

Caro mentioned that they had teamed up with the new Teen Center. He agreed that many of the improvements B-CAN seeks benefit all who don't drive. But in Brookline, schools get a lot of attention. Livability doesn't get as much.

# Newton Demographics by Age Group

(City Census, November, 2017)

Age Group	Under 50	50-59	60-69	70-75	Over 75	Totals		
<b>Total Popu</b>	47,979	11,614	10,476	4,044	7,254	81,367	<b>60+</b>	26.8%
<b>81,367</b>							<b>70+</b>	13.9%
	59.0%	14.3%	12.9%	5.0%	8.9%		<b>75+</b>	8.9%
							TOTAL #	21,774

(City Census, August, 2014)

<b>Total Popu</b>	46,194	10,450	9,718	2,974	6,623	75,959	<b>60+</b>	25.4%
<b>75,959</b>							<b>70+</b>	12.6%
	60.8%	13.8%	12.8%	3.9%	8.7%		<b>75+</b>	8.7%



## **Pedestrian Access and Removal of Architectural Access Barriers in Public Spaces in the City of Newton**

**By Maryan Amaral, Founder/Director Citizens for Access, Inc.**

The City of Newton residents include a wealth of resources with seniors and persons with disabilities including persons with physical mobility related disabilities. Existing federal and state regulations requires for a public entity to provide inclusion for persons with disabilities with the removal of existing architectural access barriers in public spaces. A large senior demographic in Newton lends further importance of increasing universally accessible public spaces, housing and transportation services throughout the city. The existence or creation of physical barriers to mobility might include barriers due to natural topography such as steep hills or inclines, or barriers created with new development of public parks, playgrounds, streets, bus-stops and buildings.

Presently, the City of Newton is addressing the removal of architectural access barriers on an *ad hoc* basis. The *Newton Commission for Persons with Disabilities* has a mission to provide ADA compliance to areas that are either identified by assessment or more than often driven by complaint of lack of access. The current ADA/Section 504 Coordinator for Newton is served with the daunting task of addressing the architectural access barriers throughout the city. With the ever changing infrastructure, new and renovating developments, as well as the requirement for inspectional services to review access during inspection, a large burden of responsibility for access in Newton is placed on one person or a few people in inspectional services in Newton. It has been found that this system is less than efficient.

In this memo, it is suggested that another approach might be to create a policy of accessibility and access barrier removal compliance checklist, that is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act Title II requirements, and utilizes checklists and universal design principles that are both simple and accessible to be used in all multi-department design decisions.

The existing retrofitting of inaccessible spaces with ramps or elevators is often expensive and not particularly accessible or architecturally attractive. A better suggestion would be to promote Universal Design principles in public spaces.

An example of a universal design principle might be that instead of installing a wheelchair ramp in the back of a building, install it in the front of the building in a design that all persons would use the ramp or accessible features as the main route of travel. For a playground, many of the public school playgrounds are found to be created without wheelchair accessible or inclusive play features. Given the importance of learning through play with classmates in the developmental years, creating accessible spaces with accessible features such as a merry-go-round that accommodates wheelchairs, will provide inclusion for all to enjoy.

An accessibility map of the accessible features in Newton should be developed. The map should be digitally edited by the public. This would have the added benefit of encouraging private businesses in Newton to make their businesses accessible as it will be obvious on the map which businesses provide access.

The City of Newton needs to make each of the websites servicing the City of Newton residents accessible for persons who are blind, deaf or have other sensory, cognitive or physical disabilities. These include features on Newton websites and resources to include “close captioning” on all videos, formats for digital readers, and other accessible features.

The City of Newton might adopt some of the practices from other municipalities such as the City of Cambridge with planning department designs that utilize universal and accessible designs in the city centers. With this in mind, the following priorities might be suggested for the Fuller Administration:

### **1. What should the Fuller administration accomplish in year 1?**

- a. Create an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II and 521cmr reg accessibility self- assessment checklist available for all of the departments in Newton. Staff could be assigned to fill out the checklist and provide to the ADA coordinator. Expand the ADA self-assessment and reviews of accessibility to all members of the public. The access improvements would be able to be provided to the City of Newton both by phone, on paper, or online, so as to provide full access to seniors and persons of all abilities.
- b. Create an online accessibility map of the City of Newton that is able to be digitally altered by the public to add markers of the accessible features in Newton public schools, public buildings. Suggestions for accessible improvements could be kept ongoing in a public monitored blog or on a website. The resources could use available technology such as Google Maps with interactive features to allow users to document wheelchair accessible locations. This project would be started in year one, but would be an ongoing project.
- c. Identify which playgrounds at the Newton Public Schools have fully accessible features, such as appears to be present at the Newton Center playground. The new playground at Underwood School will need to have accessible routes and wheelchair accessible equipment. Other playgrounds with wood chips and barriers will need to be renovated with accessible features such as rubber mats.
- d. Create groups of individuals with disabilities, parents, and seniors to offer suggestions and reviews of accessibility prior to the implementation of plans or construction. These focus groups would be able to offer suggestions in digital formats.
- e. Review the City of Newton websites and videos for accessibility problems. Add close captioning (cc) to videos, and provide multiple formats for accessibility.

### **2. What should the Fuller Administration accomplish at the end of 4 years?**

- a. Completion of the early action items under #1, including finish the accessibility self- assessment and implement change. For example, are their auditory listening devices available for members of the public in all of the auditoriums? Do all of the playgrounds have inclusive slides, and play features? Does the map of Newton include accessibility including the presence of curbcuts, ramps?
- b. Invite staff and City of Newton personnel for ongoing training on accessibility with leaders in state departments and local community leaders including ADA trainings offered by the Massachusetts Office on Disability.
- c. Invite speakers and education about the ADA and Universal Design Principals in Newton to encourage using project who adopt visions for a large accessible planning throughout the city.

### **3. What processes will be important to accomplish these goals?**

- a. The implementation of community input and seniors. This will require for access to their input in digital format, possibly community online media groups, and provided with accessible formats. Senior Centers, outreach using social media would allow for access to Newton residents.
- b. Close oversight of the construction projects including state and city projects to ensure that they meet the accessibility guidelines, and checklist created.
- c. Links to the resources of other communities such as City of Cambridge and nonprofit independent living center's research with the intent to expand the existing disability access resources to the community.
- d. Trained IT experts able to design accessible websites, utilize close- captioning and universally accessible features including wheelchair accessibility mapping.
- e. A process of requirement for staff in departments to fill out the accessibility limitations and access in their departments in all programs and services in the City of Newton. These documents are then to be made publically accessible.

#### **4. How can we get genuine, ongoing community input?**

- a. Create village groups that have short term limits so as to allow for a greater change of voices on topics that are important to them.
- b. Reopen the Newton Corner Branch Library and other community based libraries in city villages to allow for places that have community space, libraries, and full engagement programs for persons of all abilities. Adopt children's suggestions, petitions, and encourage participation of children and their parents in larger community projects that focus on accessibility in the communities they live in.

#### **5. An early action item:**

- a. Add wheelchair accessible play elements to the Underwood/Farlow Park playground with mats for an accessible route. These inclusive universal design playground features could include an accessible merry go round, accessible ramp to the slide, and elements for students with sensory disabilities such as used on the Perkins School for the Blind playground and the City of Boston "First Universally Accessible Playground" in Charlestown.
- b. This is an exciting time of change in Newton to create an ADA Action Plan with the new Fuller Administration. Thank you for this opportunity to offer suggestions.

#### **Resources:**

Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL): "<https://bostoncil.org/contact/>

Burgstahler, Sheryl, Ph.D: "*Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology* (DO-IT): "Equal Access: Universal Design of Physical Spaces;" <https://www.washington.edu/doit/equal-access-universal-design-physical-spaces>

City of Cambridge Massachusetts: "*Universal Design; Playgrounds for Everyone! (\$100,000);*" [http://pb.cambridgema.gov/universal\\_design](http://pb.cambridgema.gov/universal_design)

Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD): “ADA Title II Action Guide for State and Local Governments;” <https://humancentereddesign.org/>

Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD): <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-office-on-disability>

Mayor Thomas Menino, Boston (2013): “City of Boston’s First Universally Accessible Playground Unveiled;” <https://www.cityofboston.gov/news/default.aspx?id=6395>

Poon, Linda (2017): “Google Gets Serious About Mapping for Accessibility;”  
<https://www.citylab.com/life/2017/09/google-gets-serious-about-mapping-wheelchair-accessibility/539220/>

U.S. Department of Justice: “Information and Technical Assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act;” [https://www.ada.gov/ada\\_title\\_II.htm](https://www.ada.gov/ada_title_II.htm)

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